

THOMAS CARLYLE'S
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THE EARLY KINGS OF NORWAY;

AN ESSAY ON THE
PORTRAITS OF JOHN KNOX;

AND

A GENERAL INDEX
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THE
EARLY KINGS OF NORWAY

ALSO
AN ESSAY ON THE
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BY
THOMAS CARLYLE.

[1875.]

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CONTENTS.

EARLY KINGS OF NORWAY.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. HARALD HAARFAGR	3
II. ERIC BLOOD-AXE AND BROTHERS	9
III. HAKON THE GOOD	12
IV. HARALD GREYFELL AND BROTHERS	20
V. HAKON JARL	25
VI. OLAF TRYGGVESON	32
VII. REIGN OF OLAF TRYGGVESON	37
VIII. JARLS ERIC AND SVEIN	57
IX. KING OLAF THE THICK-SET'S VIKING DAYS	63
X. REIGN OF KING OLAF THE SAINT	72
XI. MAGNUS THE GOOD AND OTHERS	100
XII. OLAF THE TRANQUIL, MAGNUS BAREFOOT, AND SIGURD THE CRUSADER	114
XIII. MAGNUS THE BLIND, HARALD GYLLE, AND MUTUAL EXTINC- TION OF THE HAARFAGRS	120
XIV. SVERRIR AND DESCENDANTS, TO HAKON THE OLD	122
XV. HAKON THE OLD AT LARGS	125
XVI. EPILOGUE	128

THE PORTRAITS OF JOHN KNOX.

p. 135.

GENERAL INDEX.

p. 209.

EARLY KINGS OF NORWAY.

THE Icelanders, in their long winter, had a great habit of writing; and were, and still are, excellent in penmanship, says Dahlmann. It is to this fact that any little history there is of the Norse Kings and their old tragedies, crimes, and heroisms, is almost all due. The Icelanders, it seems, not only made beautiful letters on their paper or parchment, but were laudably observant and desirous of accuracy; and have left us such a collection of narratives (*Sagas*, literally 'Says') as, for quantity and quality, is unexampled among rude nations. Snorro Sturleson's History of the Norse Kings is built out of these old Sagas; and has in it a great deal of poetic fire, not a little faithful sagacity applied in sifting and adjusting these old Sagas; and, in a word, deserves, were it once well edited, furnished with accurate maps, chronological summaries, &c., to be reckoned among the great history-books of the world. It is from these sources, greatly aided by accurate, learned, and unwearied Dahlmann,¹ the German Professor, that the following rough notes of the early Norway Kings are hastily thrown together. In Histories of England (Rapin's excepted) next to nothing has been shown of the many and strong threads of connection between English affairs and Norse.

¹ J. G. Dahlmann, *Geschichte von Dannemark*, 3 voll. 8vo. Hamburg, 1840-3.

EARLY KINGS OF NORWAY.



CHAPTER I.

HARALD HAARFAGR.

TILL about the Year of Grace 860 there were no kings in Norway, nothing but numerous jarls,—essentially kinglets,—each presiding over a kind of republican or parliamentary little territory; generally striving each to be on some terms of human neighbourhood with those about him, but,—in spite of '*Fylke Things*' (Folk Things, little parish parliaments), and small combinations of these, which had gradually formed themselves,—often reduced to the unhappy state of quarrel with them. Harald Haarfagr was the first to put an end to this state of things, and become memorable and profitable to his country by uniting it under one head and making a kingdom of it; which it has continued to be ever since. His father, Halfdan the Black, had already begun this rough but salutary process,—inspired by the cupidities and instincts, by the faculties and opportunities, which the good genius of this world, beneficent often enough under savage forms, and diligent at all times to diminish anarchy as the world's *worst* savagery, usually appoints in such cases,—*conquest*, hard fighting, followed by wise guidance of the conquered;—but it was Harald the

Fairhaired, his son, who conspicuously carried it on and completed it. Harald's birth-year, death-year, and chronology in general, are known only by inference and computation; but, by the latest reckoning, he died about the year 933 of our era, a man of eighty-three.

The business of conquest lasted Harald about twelve years (A.D. 860-872 ?), in which he subdued also the vikings of the out-islands, Orkneys, Shetlands, Hebrides, and Man. Sixty more years were given him to consolidate and regulate what he had conquered, which he did with great judgment, industry, and success. His reign altogether is counted to have been of over seventy years.

The beginning of his great adventure was of a romantic character,—youthful love for the beautiful Gyda, a then glorious and famous young lady of those regions, whom the young Harald aspired to marry. Gyda answered his embassy and prayer in a distant, lofty manner: “Her it would not beseem to wed any Jarl or poor creature of that kind; let him do as Gorm of Denmark, Eric of Sweden, Egbert of England, and others had done,—subdue into peace and regulation the confused, contentious bits of jarls round him, and become a king; then, perhaps, she might think of his proposal; till then, not.” Harald was struck with this proud answer, which rendered Gyda tenfold more desirable to him. He vowed to let his hair grow, never to cut or even to comb it till this feat were done, and the peerless Gyda his own. He proceeded accordingly to conquer, in fierce battle, a Jarl or two every year, and, at the end of twelve years, had his unkempt (and almost unimaginable) head of hair clipt off,—Jarl Rögnwald (*Reginald*) of Möre, the most valued and valuable of all his subject-jarls, being promoted to this sublime barber function;—after which

King Harald, with head thoroughly cleaned, and hair grown, or growing again to the luxuriant beauty that had no equal in his day, brought home his Gyda, and made her the brightest queen in all the north. He had after her, in succession, or perhaps even simultaneously in some cases, at least six other wives; and by Gyda herself one daughter and four sons.

Harald was not to be considered a strict-living man, and he had a great deal of trouble, as we shall see, with the tumultuous ambition of his sons; but he managed his government, aided by Jarl Rögnwald and others, in a large, quietly potent, and successful manner; and it lasted in this royal form till his death, after sixty years of it.

These were the times of Norse colonisation; proud Norsemen flying into other lands, to freer scenes,—to Iceland, to the Farøe Islands, which were hitherto quite vacant (tenanted only by some mournful hermit, Irish Christian *fakir*, or so); still more copiously to the Orkney and Shetland Isles, the Hebrides and other countries where Norse squatters and settlers already were. Settlement of Iceland, we say; settlement of the Farøe Islands, and, by far the notablest of all, settlement of Normandy by Rolf the Ganger (A.D. 876?).¹

Rolf, son of Rögnwald,² was lord of three little islets far north, near the Fjord of Folden, called the Three Vigten Islands; but his chief means of living was that of sea robbery; which, or at least Rolf's conduct in which, Harald did not approve of. In the Court of Harald, sea-robbery was strictly forbidden as between Harald's own countries,

¹ 'Settlement,' dated 912, by Munch, Hénault, &c. The Saxon Chronicle says (anno 876): 'In this year Rolf overran Normandy with his army, and he reigned fifty winters.'

² Dahlmann, ii. 87.

but as against foreign countries it continued to be the one profession for a gentleman ; thus, I read, Harald's own chief son, King Eric that afterwards was, had been at sea in such employments ever since his twelfth year. Rolf's crime, however, was that in coming home from one of these expeditions, his crew having fallen short of victual, Rolf landed with them on the shore of Norway, and, in his strait, drove in some cattle there (a crime by law) and proceeded to kill and eat ; which, in a little while, he heard that King Harald was on foot to enquire into and punish ; whereupon Rolf the Ganger speedily got into his ships again, got to the coast of France with his sea-robbers, got infestment by the poor King of France in the fruitful, shaggy desert which is since called Normandy, land of the Northmen ; and there, gradually felling the forests, banking the rivers, tilling the fields, became, during the next two centuries, Wilhelmus Conquæstor, the man famous to England, and momentous at this day, not to England alone, but to all speakers of the English tongue, now spread from side to side of the world in a wonderful degree. Tancred of Hauteville and his Italian Normans, though important too, in Italy, are not worth naming in comparison. This is a feracious earth, and the grain of mustard-seed will grow to miraculous extent in some cases.

Harald's chief helper, counsellor, and lieutenant was the above-mentioned Jarl Rögnwald of Möre, who had the honour to cut Harald's dreadful head of hair. This Rögnwald was father of Turf-Einar, who first invented peat in the Orkneys, finding the wood all gone there ; and is remembered to this day. Einar, being come to these islands by King Harald's permission, to see what he could do in them,—islands inhabited by what miscellany of Picts, Scots,

Norse squatters we do not know,—found the indispensable fuel all wasted. Turf-Einar too may be regarded as a benefactor to his kind. He was, it appears, a bastard; and got no coddling from his father, who disliked him, partly perhaps, because ‘he was ugly and blind of an eye,’—got no flattering even on his conquest of the Orkneys and invention of peat. Here is the parting speech his father made to him on fitting him out with a ‘long-ship’ (ship of war, ‘dragon-ship,’ ancient seventy-four), and sending him forth to make a living for himself in the world: “It were best if thou never camest back, for I have small hope that thy people will have honour by thee; thy mother’s kin throughout is slavish.”

Harald Haarfagr had a good many sons and daughters; the daughters he married mostly to jarls of due merit who were loyal to him; with the sons, as remarked above, he had a great deal of trouble. They were ambitious, stirring fellows, and grudged at their finding so little promotion from a father so kind to his jarls; sea-robbery by no means an adequate career for the sons of a great king. Two of them, Halfdan Haaleg (Long-leg), and Gudröd Ljome (Gleam), jealous of the favours won by the great Jarl Rögnwald, surrounded him in his house one night, and burnt him and sixty men to death there. That was the end of Rögnwald, the invaluable jarl, always true to Haarfagr; and distinguished in world history by producing Rolf the Ganger, author of the Norman Conquest of England, and Turf-Einar, who invented peat in the Orkneys. Whether Rolf had left Norway at this time there is no chronology to tell me. As to Rolf’s surname, ‘Ganger,’ there are various hypotheses: the likeliest, perhaps, that Rolf was so weighty a man no horse (small Norwegian horses, big ponies rather) could

carry him, and that he usually walked, having a mighty stride withal, and great velocity on foot.

One of these murderers of Jarl Rögnwald quietly set himself in Rögnwald's place, the other making for Orkney to serve Turf-Einar in like fashion. Turf-Einar, taken by surprise, fled to the mainland; but returned, days or perhaps weeks after, ready for battle, fought with Halfdan, put his party to flight, and at next morning's light searched the island and slew all the men he found. As to Halfdan Long-leg himself, in fierce memory of his own murdered father, Turf-Einar 'cut an eagle on his back,' that is to say, hewed the ribs from each side of the spine and turned them out like the wings of a spread-eagle: a mode of Norse vengeance fashionable at that time in extremely aggravated cases!

Harald Haarfagr, in the mean time, had descended upon the Rögnwald scene, not in mild mood towards the new jarl there; indignantly dismissed said jarl, and appointed a brother of Rögnwald (brother, notes Dahlmann), though Rögnwald had left other sons. Which done, Haarfagr sailed with all speed to the Orkneys, there to avenge that cutting of an eagle on the human back on Turf-Einar's part. Turf-Einar did not resist; submissively met the angry Haarfagr, said he left it all, what had been done, what provocation there had been, to Haarfagr's own equity and greatness of mind. Magnanimous Haarfagr inflicted a fine of sixty marks in gold, which was paid in ready money by Turf-Einar, and so the matter ended.

CHAPTER II.

ERIC BLOOD-AXE AND BROTHERS.

IN such violent courses Haarfagr's sons, I know not how many of them, had come to an untimely end; only Eric, the accomplished sea-rover, and three others remained to him. Among these four sons, rather impatient for property and authority of their own, King Harald, in his old days, tried to part his kingdom in some eligible and equitable way, and retire from the constant press of business, now becoming burdensome to him. To each of them he gave a kind of kingdom; Eric, his eldest son, to be head king, and the others to be feudatory under him, and pay a certain yearly contribution; an arrangement which did not answer well at all. Head-King Eric insisted on his tribute; quarrels arose as to the payment, considerable fighting and disturbance, bringing fierce destruction from King Eric upon many valiant but too stubborn Norse spirits, and among the rest upon all his three brothers, which got him from the Norse populations the surname of *Blod-axe*, 'Eric Blood-axe,' his title in history. One of his brothers he had killed in battle before his old father's life ended; this brother was Bjorn, a peaceable, improving, trading, economic Under-king, whom the others mockingly called 'Bjorn the Chapman.' The great-grandson of this Bjorn became extremely distinguished by and by as *Saint Olaf*. Head-King Eric seems to have had a violent wife, too. She was thought to have poisoned one of her other brothers-in-law. Eric Blood-axe had by no means a gentle life of it in this world, trained to sea-robbery

on the coasts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and France, since his twelfth year.

Old King Fairhair, at the age of seventy, had another son, to whom was given the name of Hakon. His mother was a slave in Fairhair's house; slave by ill-luck of war, though nobly enough born. A strange adventure connects this Hakon with England and King Athelstan, who was then entering upon his great career there. Short while after this Hakon came into the world, there entered Fairhair's palace, one evening as Fairhair sat feasting, an English ambassador or messenger, bearing in his hand, as gift from King Athelstan, a magnificent sword, with gold hilt and other fine trimmings, to the great Harald, King of Norway. Harald took the sword, drew it, or was half-drawing it, admiringly from the scabbard, when the English excellency broke into a scornful laugh, "Ha, ha; thou art now the feudatory of my English king; thou hast accepted the sword from him, and art now his man!" (acceptance of a sword in that manner being the symbol of investiture in those days.) Harald looked a trifle flurried, it is probable; but held-in his wrath, and did no damage to the tricky Englishman. He kept the matter in his mind, however, and next summer little Hakon, having got his weaning done,—one of the prettiest, healthiest little creatures,—Harald sent him off, under charge of 'Hauk' (*Hawk* so-called), one of his principal warriors, with order, "Take him to England," and instructions what to do with him there. And accordingly, one evening, Hauk, with thirty men escorting, strode into Athelstan's high dwelling (where situated, how built, whether with logs like Harald's, I cannot specifically say), into Athelstan's high presence, and silently set the wild little cherub upon Athelstan's knee. "What is this?" asked Athelstan, looking at the little cherub. "This

is King Harald's son, whom a serving-maid bore to him, and whom he now gives thee as foster-child!" Indignant Athelstan drew his sword, as if to do the gift a mischief; but Hauk said, "Thou hast taken him on thy knee" (common symbol of adoption); "thou canst kill him if thou wilt; but thou dost not thereby kill all the sons of Harald." Athelstan straightway took milder thoughts; brought up, and carefully educated Hakon; from whom, and this singular adventure, came, before very long, the first tidings of Christianity into Norway.

Harald Haarfagr, latterly withdrawn from all kinds of business, died at the age of eighty-three—about A.D. 933, as is computed; nearly contemporary in death with the first Danish King, Gorm the Old, who had done a corresponding feat in reducing Denmark under one head. Remarkable old men, these two first kings; and possessed of gifts for bringing Chaos a little nearer to the form of Cosmos; possessed, in fact, of loyalties to Cosmos, that is to say, of authentic virtues in the savage state, such as have been needed in all societies at their incipience in this world; a kind of 'virtues' hugely in discredit at present, but not unlikely to be needed again, to the astonishment of careless persons, before all is done!

CHAPTER III.

HAKON THE GOOD.

ERIC BLOOD-AXE, whose practical reign is counted to have begun about A.D. 930, had by this time, or within a year or so of this time, pretty much extinguished all his brother kings, and crushed down recalcitrant spirits, in his violent way; but had naturally become entirely unpopular in Norway, and filled it with silent discontent and even rage against him. Hakon Fairhair's last son, the little foster-child of Athelstan in England, who had been baptised and carefully educated, was come to his fourteenth or fifteenth year at his father's death; a very shining youth, as Athelstan saw with just pleasure. So soon as the few preliminary preparations had been settled, Hakon, furnished with a ship or two by Athelstan, suddenly appeared in Norway; got acknowledged by the Peasant Thing in Trondhjem; 'the news of which flew over Norway, like fire through dried grass,' says an old chronicler. So that Eric, with his Queen Gunhild, and seven small children, had to run; no other shift for Eric. They went to the Orkneys first of all, then to England, and he 'got Northumberland as earldom,' I vaguely hear, from Athelstan. But Eric soon died, and his queen, with her children, went back to the Orkneys in search of refuge or help; to little purpose there or elsewhere. From Orkney she went to Denmark, where Harald Blue-tooth took her poor eldest boy as foster-child; but I fear did not very faithfully keep that promise. The Danes had been robbing extensively during the late tumults in Norway; this the

Christian Hakon, now established there, paid in kind, and the two countries were at war; so that Gunhild's little boy was a welcome card in the hand of Blue-tooth.

Hakon proved a brilliant and successful king; regulated many things, public law among others (*Gule-Thing* Law, *Froste-Thing* Law: these are little codes of his accepted by their respective Things, and had a salutary effect in their time); with prompt dexterity he drove back the Blue-tooth foster-son invasions every time they came; and on the whole gained for himself the name of Hakon the Good. These Danish invasions were a frequent source of trouble to him, but his greatest and continual trouble was that of extirpating heathen idolatry from Norway, and introducing the Christian Evangel in its stead. His transcendent anxiety to achieve this salutary enterprise was all along his grand difficulty and stumbling-block; the heathen opposition to it being also rooted and great. Bishops and priests from England Hakon had, preaching and baptising what they could, but making only slow progress; much too slow for Hakon's zeal. On the other hand, every Yule-tide, when the chief heathen were assembled in his own palace on their grand sacrificial festival, there was great pressure put upon Hakon, as to sprinkling with horse-blood, drinking Yule-beer, eating horse-flesh, and the other distressing rites; the whole of which Hakon abhorred, and with all his steadfastness strove to reject utterly. Sigurd, Jarl of Lade (Trondhjem), a liberal heathen, not openly a Christian, was ever a wise counsellor and conciliator in such affairs; and proved of great help to Hakon. Once, for example, there having risen at a Yule-feast, loud, almost stormful demand that Hakon, like a true man and brother, should drink Yule-beer with them in their sacred hightide, Sigurd persuaded him to comply, for peace's sake,

at least in form. Hakon took the cup in his left hand (excellent *hot beer*), and with his right cut the sign of the cross above it, then drank a draught. "Yes; but what is this with the king's right hand?" cried the company. "Don't you see?" answered shifty Sigurd; "he makes the sign of Thor's hammer before drinking!" which quenched the matter for the time.

Horse-flesh, horse-broth, and the horse ingredient generally, Hakon all but inexorably declined. By Sigurd's pressing exhortation and entreaty, he did once take a kettle of horse-broth by the handle, with a good deal of linen-quilt or towel interposed, and did open his lips for what of steam could insinuate itself. At another time he consented to a particle of horse-liver, intending privately, I guess, to keep it outside the gullet, and smuggle it away without *swallowing*; but farther than this not even Sigurd could persuade him to go. At the Things held in regard to this matter Hakon's success was always incomplete; now and then it was plain failure, and Hakon had to draw back till a better time. Here is one specimen of the response he got on such an occasion; curious specimen, withal, of antique parliamentary eloquence from an Anti-Christian Thing.

At a Thing of all the Fylkes of Trondhjem, Thing held at Froste in that region, King Hakon, with all the eloquence he had, signified that it was imperatively necessary that all Bonders and sub-Bonders should become Christians, and believe in one God, Christ the Son of Mary; renouncing entirely blood sacrifices and heathen idols; should keep every seventh day holy, abstain from labour that day, and even from food, devoting the day to fasting and sacred meditation. Whereupon, by way of universal answer, arose a confused universal murmur of entire dissent. "Take away from us our old

belief, and also our time for labour!" murmured they in angry astonishment; "how can even the land be got tilled in that way?" "We cannot work if we don't get food," said the hand labourers and slaves. "It lies in King Hakon's blood," remarked others; "his father and all his kindred were apt to be stingy about food, though liberal enough with money." At length, one Osbjörn (or Bear of the Asen or Gods, what we now call Osborne), one Osbjörn of Medalhusin Gulathal, stepped forward, and said, in a distinct manner, "We Bonders (peasant proprietors) thought, King Hakon, when thou heldest thy first Thing-day here in Trondhjem, and we took thee for our king, and received our hereditary lands from thee again, that we had got heaven itself. But now we know not how it is, whether we have won freedom, or whether thou intendest anew to make us slaves, with this wonderful proposal that we should renounce our faith, which our fathers before us have held, and all our ancestors as well, first in the age of burial by burning, and now in that of earth burial; and yet these departed ones were much our superiors, and their faith, too, has brought prosperity to us! Thee, at the same time, we have loved so much that we raised thee to manage all the laws of the land, and speak as their voice to us all. And even now it is our will and the vote of all Bonders to keep that paction which thou gavest us here on the Thing at Froste, and to maintain thee as king so long as any of us Bonders who are here upon the Thing has life left, provided thou, king, wilt go fairly to work, and demand of us only such things as are not impossible. But if thou wilt fix upon this thing with so great obstinacy, and employ force and power, in that case, we Bonders have taken the resolution, all of us, to fall away from thee, and to take for ourselves another head, who will so behave that we may

enjoy in freedom the belief which is agreeable to us. Now shalt thou, king, choose one of these two courses before the Thing disperse." 'Whereupon,' adds the Chronicle, 'all the Bonders raised a mighty shout, "Yes, we will have it so, as 'has been said."' So that Jarl Sigurd had to intervene, and King Hakon to choose for the moment the milder branch of the alternative.¹ At other Things Hakon was more or less successful. All his days, by such methods as there were, he kept pressing forward with this great enterprise; and on the whole did thoroughly shake asunder the old edifice of heathendom, and fairly introduce some foundation for the new and better rule of faith and life among his people. Sigurd, Jarl of Lade, his wise counsellor in all these matters, is also a man worthy of notice.

Hakon's arrangements against the continual invasions of Eric's sons, with Danish Blue-tooth backing them, were manifold, and for a long time successful. He appointed, after consultation and consent in the various Things, so many war-ships, fully manned and ready, to be furnished instantly on the King's demand by each province or fjord; watch-fires, on fit places, from hill to hill all along the coast, were to be carefully set up, carefully maintained in readiness, and kindled on any alarm of war. By such methods Blue-tooth and Co.'s invasions were for a long while triumphantly, and even rapidly, one and all of them, beaten back, till at length they seemed as if intending to cease altogether, and leave Hakon alone of them. But such was not their issue after all. The sons of Eric had only abated under constant discouragement, had not finally left off from what seemed their one great feasibility in life. Gunhild, their mother, was still with them: a most contriving, fierce-minded, irrecon-

¹ Dahlmann, ii. 93.

cilable woman, diligent and urgent on them, in season and out of season; and as for King Blue-tooth, he was at all times ready to help, with his good-will at least.

That of the alarm-fires on Hakon's part was found troublesome by his people; sometimes it was even hurtful and provoking (lighting your alarm-fires and rousing the whole coast and population, when it was nothing but some paltry viking with a couple of ships); in short, the alarm-signal system fell into disuse, and good King Hakon himself, in the first place, paid the penalty. It is counted, by the latest commentators, to have been about A.D. 961, sixteenth or seventeenth year of Hakon's pious, valiant, and worthy reign. Being at a feast one day, with many guests, on the Island of Stord, sudden announcement came to him that ships from the south were approaching in quantity, and evidently ships of war. This was the biggest of all the Blue-tooth foster-son invasions; and it was fatal to Hakon the Good that night. Eyvind the Skaldaspillir (annihilator of all other Skalds), in his famed *Hakon's Song*, gives account, and, still more pertinently, the always practical Snorro. Danes in great multitude, six to one, as people afterwards computed, springing swiftly to land, and ranking themselves; Hakon, nevertheless, at once deciding not to take to his ships and run, but to fight there, one to six; fighting, accordingly, in his most splendid manner, and at last gloriously prevailing; routing and scattering back to their ships and flight homeward these six-to-one Danes. 'During the struggle of the 'fight,' says Snorro, 'he was very conspicuous among other 'men; and while the sun shone, his bright gilded helmet 'glanced, and thereby many weapons were directed at him. 'One of his henchmen, Eyvind Finnson (*i.e.* Skaldaspillir, the 'poet), took a hat, and put it over the king's helmet. Now,

‘among the hostile first leaders were two uncles of the Ericsons, brothers of Gunhild, great champions both; Skreya, the elder of them, on the disappearance of the glittering helmet, shouted boastfully, “Does the king of the Norsemen hide himself, then, or has he fled? Where now is the golden helmet?” And so saying, Skreya, and his brother Alf with him, pushed on like fools or madmen. The king said, “Come on in that way, and you shall find the king of the Norsemen!”’ And in a short space of time braggart Skreya did come up, swinging his sword, and made a cut at the king; but Thoralf the Strong, an Iclander, who fought at the king’s side, dashed his shield so hard against Skreya, that he tottered with the shock. On the same instant the king takes his sword ‘quernbiter’ (able to cut *querns* or mill-stones) with both hands, and hews Skreya through helm and head, cleaving him down to the shoulders. Thoralf also slew Alf. That was what they got by such over-hasty search for the king of the Norsemen.²

Snorro considers the fall of these two champion uncles as the crisis of the fight; the Danish force being much disheartened by such a sight, and King Hakon now pressing on so hard that all men gave way before him, the battle on the Ericson part became a whirl of recoil; and in a few minutes more a torrent of mere flight and haste to get on board their ships, and put to sea again; in which operation many of them were drowned, says Snorro; survivors making instant sail for Denmark in that sad condition.

This seems to have been King Hakon’s finest battle, and the most conspicuous of his victories, due not a little to his own grand qualities shown on the occasion. But, alas! it was his last also. He was still zealously directing the chase

² Laing’s *Snorro*, i 344.

of that mad Danish flight, or whirl of recoil towards their ships, when an arrow, shot most likely at a venture, hit him under the left armpit; and this proved his death.

He was helped into his ship, and made sail for Alrekstad, where his chief residence in those parts was; but had to stop at a smaller place of his (which had been his mother's, and where he himself was born)—a place called Hella (the Flat Rock), still known as 'Hakon's Hella,' faint from loss of blood, and crushed down as he had never before felt. Having no son and only one daughter, he appointed these invasive sons of Eric to be sent for, and if he died to become king; but to "spare his friends and kindred." "If a longer life be granted me," he said, "I will go out of this land to Christian men, and do penance for what I have committed against God. But if I die in the country of the heathen, let me have such burial as you yourselves think fittest." These are his last recorded words. And in heathen fashion he was buried, and besung by Eyvind and the Skalds, though himself a zealously Christian king. Hakon the *Good*; so one still finds him worthy of being called. The sorrow on Hakon's death, Snorro tells us, was so great and universal, 'that he was lamented 'both by friends and enemies; and they said that never 'again would Norway see such a king.'

CHAPTER IV.

HARALD GREYFELL AND BROTHERS.

ERIC'S sons, four or five of them, with a Harald at the top, now at once got Norway in hand, all of it but Trondhjem, as king and under-kings; and made a severe time of it for those who had been, or seemed to be, their enemies. Excellent Jarl Sigurd, always so useful to Hakon and his country, was killed by them; and they came to repent that before very long. The slain Sigurd left a son, Hakon, as Jarl, who became famous in the northern world by and by. This Hakon, and him only, would the Trondhjemers accept as sovereign. "Death to him, then," said the sons of Eric, but only in secret, till they had got their hands free and were ready; which was not yet for some years. Nay, Hakon, when actually attacked, made good resistance, and threatened to cause trouble. Nor did he by any means get his death from these sons of Eric at this time, or till long afterwards at all, from one of their kin, as it chanced. On the contrary, he fled to Denmark now, and by and by managed to come back, to their cost.

Among their other chief victims were two cousins of their own, Tryggve and Gudröd, who had been honest under-kings to the late head-king, Hakon the Good; but were now become suspect, and had to fight for their lives, and lose them in a tragic manner. Tryggve had a son, whom we shall hear of. Gudröd, son of worthy Bjorn the Chapman, was grandfather of Saint Olaf, whom all men have heard of,—how has a church in Southwark even, and another in Old

Jewry, to this hour. In all these violences, Gunhild, widow of the late king Eric, was understood to have a principal hand. She had come back to Norway with her sons; and naturally passed for the secret adviser and Maternal President in whatever of violence went on; always reckoned a fell, vehement, relentless personage where her own interests were concerned. Probably as things settled, her influence on affairs grew less. At least one hopes so; and, in the Sagas, hears less and less of her, and before long nothing.

Harald, the head-king in this Eric fraternity, does not seem to have been a bad man,—the contrary indeed; but his position was untowardly, full of difficulty and contradictions. Whatever Harald could accomplish for behoof of Christianity, or real benefit to Norway, in these cross circumstances, he seems to have done in a modest and honest manner. He got the name of *Greyfell* from his people on a very trivial account, but seemingly with perfect good humour on their part. Some Iceland trader had brought a cargo of furs to Trondhjem (Lade) for sale; sale being slacker than the Icelanders wished, he presented a chosen specimen, cloak, doublet, or whatever it was, to Harald; who wore it with acceptance in public, and rapidly brought disposal of the Icelanders' stock, and the surname of *Greyfell* to himself. His under-kings and he were certainly not popular, though I almost think Greyfell himself, in absence of his mother and the under-kings, might have been so. But here they all were, and had wrought great trouble in Norway. "Too many of them," said everybody; "too many of these courts and court people, eating up any substance that there is." For the seasons withal, two or three of them in succession, were bad for grass, much more for grain; no *herring* came either; very cleanness of teeth was like to come in Eyvind Skaldaspillir's

opinion. This scarcity became at last their share of the great Famine of A.D. 975, which desolated Western Europe (see the poem in the Saxon Chronicle). And all this by Eyvind Skaldaspillir, and the heathen Norse in general, was ascribed to anger of the heathen gods. Discontent in Norway, and especially in Eyvind Skaldaspillir, seems to have been very great.

Whereupon exile Hakon, Jarl Sigurd's son, bestirs himself in Denmark, backed by old King Blue-tooth, and begins invading and encroaching in a miscellaneous way; especially intriguing and contriving plots all round him. An unfathomably cunning kind of fellow, as well as an audacious and strong-handed! Intriguing in Trondhjem, where he gets the under-king, Greyfell's brother, fallen upon and murdered; intriguing with Gold Harald, a distinguished cousin or nephew of King Blue-tooth's, who had done fine viking work, and gained such wealth that he got the epithet of 'Gold,' and who now was infinitely desirous of a share in Blue-tooth's kingdom as the proper finish to these sea-rovings. He even ventured one day to make publicly a distinct proposal that way to King Harald Blue-tooth himself; who flew into thunder and lightning at the mere mention of it; so that none durst speak to him for several days afterwards. Of both these Haralds Hakon was confidential friend; and needed all his skill to walk without immediate annihilation between such a pair of dragons, and work out Norway for himself withal. In the end he found he must take solidly to Blue-tooth's side of the question; and that they two must provide a recipe for Gold Harald and Norway both at once.

"It is as much as your life is worth to speak again of sharing this Danish kingdom," said Hakon very privately to

Gold Harald; "but could not you, my golden friend, be content with Norway for a kingdom, if one helped you to it?"

"That could I well," answered Harald.

"Then keep me those nine war-ships you have just been rigging for a new viking cruise; have these in readiness when I lift my finger!"

That was the recipe contrived for Gold Harald; recipe for King Greyfell goes into the same vial, and is also ready.

Hitherto the Hakon-Blue-tooth disturbances in Norway had amounted to but little. King Greyfell, a very active and valiant man, has constantly, without much difficulty, repelled these sporadic bits of troubles; but Greyfell, all the same, would willingly have peace with dangerous old Blue-tooth (ever anxious to get his clutches over Norway on any terms), if peace with him could be had. Blue-tooth, too, professes every willingness; inveigles Greyfell, he and Hakon do, to have a friendly meeting on the Danish borders, and not only settle all these quarrels, but generously settle Greyfell in certain fiefs which he claimed in Denmark itself; and so swear everlasting friendship. Greyfell joyfully complies, punctually appears at the appointed day in Lymfjord Sound, the appointed place. Whereupon Hakon gives signal to Gold Harald, "To Lymfjord with these nine ships of yours, swift!" Gold Harald flies to Lymfjord with his ships, challenges King Harald Greyfell to land and fight; which the undaunted Greyfell, though so far outnumbered, does; and, fighting his very best, perishes there, he and almost all his people. Which done, Jarl Hakon, who is in readiness, attacks Gold Harald, the victorious but the wearied; easily beats Gold Harald, takes him prisoner, and instantly hangs and

ends him, to the huge joy of King Blue-tooth and Hakon ; who now make instant voyage to Norway ; drive all the brother under-kings into rapid flight to the Orkneys, to any readiest shelter ; and so, under the patronage of Blue-tooth, Hakon, with the title of Jarl, becomes ruler of Norway. This foul treachery done on the brave and honest Harald Grey-fell is by some dated about A.D. 969, by Munch, 965, by others, computing out of Snorro only, A.D. 975. For there is always an uncertainty in these Icelandic dates (say rather, rare and rude attempts at dating, without even an 'A.D.' or other fixed 'year one' to go upon in Iceland), though seldom, I think, so large a discrepancy as here.

CHAPTER V.

HAKON JARL.

HAKON JARL, such the style he took, had engaged to pay some kind of tribute to King Blue-tooth, 'if he could;' but he never did pay any, pleading always the necessity of his own affairs; with which excuse, joined to Hakon's readiness in things less important, King Blue-tooth managed to content himself, Hakon being always his good neighbour, at least, and the two mutually dependent. In Norway, Hakon, without the title of king, did in a strong-handed, steadfast, and at length successful way, the office of one; governed Norway (some count) for above twenty years; and, both at home and abroad, had much consideration through most of that time; specially amongst the heathen orthodox, for Hakon Jarl himself was a zealous heathen, fixed in his mind against these chimerical Christian innovations and unsalutary changes of creed, and would have gladly trampled out all traces of what the last two kings (for Greyfell, also, was an English Christian after his sort) had done in this respect. But he wisely discerned that it was not possible, and that, for peace's sake, he must not even attempt it, but must strike preferably into 'perfect toleration,' and that of 'every one getting to heaven' (or even to the other goal) 'in his own way.' He himself, it is well known, repaired many heathen temples (a great 'church builder' in his way!), manufactured many splendid idols, with much gilding and such artistic ornament as there was,—in particular, one huge image of Thor, not forgetting the hammer and appendages, and such

a collar (supposed of solid gold, which it was not quite, as we shall hear in time) round the neck of him as was never seen in all the North. How he did his own Yule festivals, with what magnificent solemnity, the horse-eatings, blood-sprinklings, and other sacred rites, need not be told. Something of a 'Ritualist,' one may perceive; perhaps had Scandinavian Puseyisms in him, and other desperate heathen notions. He was universally believed to have gone into magic, for one thing, and to have dangerous potencies derived from the Devil himself. The dark heathen mind of him struggling vehemently in that strange element, not altogether so unlike our own in some points.

For the rest, he was evidently, in practical matters, a man of sharp, clear insight, of steadfast resolution, diligence, promptitude; and managed his secular matters uncommonly well. Had sixteen Jarls under him, though himself only Hakon Jarl by title; and got obedience from them stricter than any king since Haarfagr had done. Add to which that the country had years excellent for grass and crop, and that the herrings came in exuberance; tokens, to the thinking mind, that Hakon Jarl was a favourite of Heaven.

His fight with the far-famed Jomsvikings was his grandest exploit in public rumour. Jomsburg, a locality not now known, except that it was near the mouth of the River Oder, denoted in those ages the impregnable castle of a certain body corporate, or 'Sea Robbery Association (limited),' which, for some generations, held the Baltic in terror, and plundered far beyond the Belt,—in the ocean itself, in Flanders and the opulent trading havens there,—above all, in opulent anarchic England, which, for forty years from about this time, was the pirates' Goshen; and yielded, regularly every summer, slaves, Danegelt, and miscellaneous plunder,

like no other country Jomsburg or the viking-world had ever known. *Palnatoke*, Bue, and the other quasi-heroic heads of this establishment are still remembered in the northern parts. *Palnatoke* is the title of a tragedy by Oehlenschläger, which had its run of immortality in Copenhagen some sixty or seventy years ago.

I judge the institution to have been in its floweriest state, probably now in Hakon Jarl's time. Hakon Jarl and these pirates, robbing Hakon's subjects and merchants that frequented him, were naturally in quarrel; and frequent fightings had fallen out, not generally to the profit of the Jomsburgers, who at last determined on revenge, and the rooting out of this obstructive Hakon Jarl. They assembled in force at the Cape of Stad,—in the Firda Fylke; and the fight was dreadful in the extreme, noise of it filling all the north for long afterwards. Hakon, fighting like a lion, could scarcely hold his own,—Death or Victory, the word on both sides; when suddenly, the heavens grew black, and there broke out a terrific storm of thunder and hail, appalling to the human mind,—universe swallowed wholly in black night; only the momentary forked-blazes, the thunder-pealing as of Ragnarök, and the battering hail-torrents, hail-stones about the size of an egg. Thor with his hammer evidently acting; but in behalf of whom? The Jomsburgers in the hideous darkness, broken only by flashing thunderbolts, had a dismal apprehension that it was probably not on their behalf (Thor having a sense of justice in him); and before the storm ended, thirty-five of their seventy ships sheered away, leaving gallant Bue, with the other thirty-five, to follow as they liked, who reproachfully hailed these fugitives, and continued the now hopeless battle. Bue's nose and lips were smashed or cut away; Bue man-

aged, half-articulate, to exclaim, "Ha! the maids ('mays') of Fünen will never kiss me more. Overboard, all ye Bue's men!" And taking his two sea-chests, with all the gold he had gained in such life-struggle from of old, sprang overboard accordingly, and finished the affair. Hakon Jarl's renown rose naturally to the transcendent pitch after this exploit. His people, I suppose chiefly the Christian part of them, whispered one to another, with a shudder, "That in the blackest of the thunderstorm, he had taken his youngest little boy, and made away with him; sacrificed him to Thor or some devil, and gained his victory by art-magic, or something worse." Jarl Eric, Hakon's eldest son, without suspicion of art-magic, but already a distinguished viking, became thrice distinguished by his style of sea-fighting in this battle; and awakened great expectations in the viking public; of him we shall hear again.

The Jomsburgers, one might fancy, after this sad clap went visibly down in the world; but the fact is not altogether so. Old King Blue-tooth was now dead, died of a wound got in battle with his *unnatural* (so-called 'natural') son and successor, Otto Svein of the Forked Beard, afterwards king and conqueror of England for a little while; and seldom, perhaps never, had vikingism been in such flower as now. This man's name is Sven in Swedish, Svend in German, and means *boy* or *lad*,—the English 'swain.' It was at old 'Father Blue-tooth's funeral-ale' (drunken burial-feast), that Svein, carousing with his Jomsburg chiefs and other choice spirits, generally of the robber class, all risen into height of highest robber enthusiasm, pledged the vow to one another; Svein that he would conquer England (which, in a sense, he, after long struggling, did); and the Jomsburgers that they would ruin and root out Hakon Jarl

(which, as we have just seen, they could by no means do), and other guests other foolish things which proved equally unfeasible. Sea-robber volunteers so especially abounding in that time, one perceives how easily the Jomsburgers could recruit themselves, build or refit new robber fleets, man them with the pick of crews, and steer for opulent, fruitful England; where, under Ethelred the Unready, was such a field for profitable enterprise as the viking public never had before or since.

An idle question sometimes rises on me,—idle enough, for it never can be answered in the affirmative or the negative, Whether it was not these same refitted Jomsburgers who appeared somewhere after this at Red Head Point, on the shore of Angus, and sustained a new severe beating, in what the Scotch still faintly remember as their ‘Battle of Loncarty’? Beyond doubt a powerful Norse-pirate armament dropt anchor at the Red Head, to the alarm of peaceable mortals, about that time. It was thought and hoped to be on its way for England, but it visibly hung on for several days, deliberating (as was thought) whether they would do this poorer coast the honour to land on it before going farther. Did land, and vigorously plunder and burn southward as far as Perth; laid siege to Perth; but brought out King Kenneth on them, and produced that ‘Battle of Loncarty’ which still dwells in vague memory among the Scots. Perhaps it might be the Jomsburgers; perhaps also not; for there were many pirate associations, lasting not from century to century like the Jomsburgers, but only for very limited periods, or from year to year; indeed, it was mainly by such that the splendid thief-harvest of England was reaped in this disastrous time. No Scottish chronicler gives the least of exact date to their famed victory of Loncarty,

only that it was achieved by Kenneth III., which will mean some time between A.D. 975 and 994; and, by the order they put it in, probably soon after A.D. 975, or the beginning of this Kenneth's reign. Buchanan's narrative, carefully distilled from all the ancient Scottish sources, is of admirable quality for style and otherwise; quiet, brief, with perfect clearness, perfect credibility even,—except that semimiraculous appendage of the Ploughmen, Hay and Sons, always hanging to the tail of it; the grain of possible truth in which can now never be extracted by man's art!¹ In brief, what we know is, fragments of ancient human bones and armour have occasionally been ploughed up in this locality, proof-positive of ancient fighting here; and the fight fell out not long after Hakon's beating of the Jomsburgers at the Cape of Stad. And in such dim glimmer of wavering twilight, the question whether these of Loncarty were refitted Jomsburgers or not, must be left hanging. Loncarty is now the biggest bleachfield in Queen Victoria's dominions; no village or hamlet there, only the huge bleaching-house and a beautiful fiêld, some six or seven miles northwest of Perth, bordered by the beautiful Tay river on the one side, and by its beautiful tributary Almond on the other; a Loncarty fitted either for bleaching linen, or for a bit of fair duel between nations, in those simple times. Whether our refitted Jomsburgers had the least thing to do with it is only matter of fancy, but if it were they who here again got a good beating, fancy would be glad to find herself fact. The old piratical kings of Denmark had been at the founding of Jomsburg, and to Svein of the Forked Beard it was still vitally important, but not so to the great Knut, or any king

¹ G. Buchanani *Opera Omnia*, i. 103-4 (Curante Ruddimano, Edinburgi 1715).

that followed; all of whom had better business than mere thieving; and it was Magnus the Good, of Norway, a man of still higher anti-anarchic qualities, that annihilated it, about a century later.

Hakon Jarl, his chief labours in the world being over, is said to have become very dissolute in his elder days, especially in the matter of women; the wretched old fool, led away by idleness and fulness of bread, which to all of us are well said to be the parents of mischief. Having absolute power, he got into the habit of openly plundering men's pretty daughters and wives from them, and, after a few weeks, sending them back; greatly to the rage of the fierce Norse heart, had there been any means of resisting or revenging. It did, after a little while, prove the ruin and destruction of Hakon the Rich, as he was then called. It opened the door, namely, for entry of Olaf Tryggveson upon the scene,—a very much grander man; in regard to whom the wiles and traps of Hakon proved to be a recipe, not on Tryggveson, but on the wily Hakon himself, as shall now be seen straightway

CHAPTER VI.

OLAF TRYGGVESON.

HAKON, in late times, had heard of a famous stirring person, victorious in various lands and seas, latterly united in sea-robbery with Svein, Prince Royal of Denmark, afterwards King Svein of the Double-beard (*'Zvae Skiaeg,' Twa Shag*) or fork-beard, both of whom had already done transcendent feats in the viking way during this copartnery. The fame of Svein, and this stirring personage, whose name was 'Ole,' and, recently, their stupendous feats in plunder of England, siege of London, and other wonders and splendours of viking glory and success, had gone over all the North, awakening the attention of Hakon and everybody there. The name of 'Ole' was enigmatic, mysterious, and even dangerous-looking to Hakon Jarl; who at length sent out a confidential spy to investigate this 'Ole;' a feat which the confidential spy did completely accomplish,—by no means to Hakon's profit! The mysterious 'Ole' proved to be no other than *Olaf*, son of Tryggve, destined to blow Hakon Jarl suddenly into destruction, and become famous among the heroes of the Norse world.

Of Olaf Tryggveson one always hopes there might, one day, some real outline of a biography be written; fished from the abysses where (as usual) it welters deep in toul neighbourhood for the present. Farther on we intend a few words more upon the matter. But in this place all that concerns us in it limits itself to the two following facts: first, that Hakon's confidential spy 'found Ole in Dublin;'

picked acquaintance with him, got him to confess that he was actually Olaf, son of Tryggve (the Tryggve, whom Blood-axe's fierce widow and her sons had murdered); got him gradually to own that perhaps an expedition into Norway might have its chances; and finally that, under such a wise and loyal guidance as his (the confidential spy's, whose friendship for Tryggveson was so indubitable), he (Tryggveson) would actually try it upon Hakon Jarl, the dissolute old scoundrel. Fact second is, that about the time they two set sail from Dublin on their Norway expedition, Hakon Jarl removed to Trondhjem, then called Lade; intending to pass some months there.

Now just about the time when Tryggveson, spy, and party had landed in Norway, and were advancing upon Lade, with what support from the public could be got, dissolute old Hakon Jarl had heard of one Gudrun, a Bonder's wife, unparalleled in beauty, who was called in those parts, 'Sunbeam of the Grove' (so inexpressibly lovely); and sent off a couple of thralls to bring her to him. "Never," answered Gudrun; "never," her indignant husband; in a tone dangerous and displeasing to these Court thralls; who had to leave rapidly, but threatened to return in better strength before long. Whereupon, instantly, the indignant Bonder and his Sunbeam of the Grove sent out their war-arrow, rousing all the country into angry promptitude, and more than one perhaps into greedy hope of revenge for their own injuries. The rest of Hakon's history now rushes on with extreme rapidity.

Sunbeam of the Grove, when next demanded of her Bonder, has the whole neighbourhood assembled in arms round her; rumour of Tryggveson is fast making it the whole country. Hakon's insolent messengers are cut in

pieces; Hakon finds he cannot fly under cover too soon. With a single slave he flies that same night;—but whitherward? Can think of no safe place, except to some old mistress of his, who lives retired in that neighbourhood, and has some pity or regard for the wicked old Hakon. Old mistress does receive him, pities him, will do all she can to protect and hide him. But how, by what uttermost stretch of female artifice hide him here; every one will search here first of all! Old mistress, by the slave's help, extemporises a cellar under the floor of her pig-house; sticks Hakon and slave into that, as the one safe seclusion she can contrive. Hakon and slave, begrunted by the pigs above them, tortured by the devils within and about them, passed two days in circumstances more and more horrible. For they heard, through their light-slit and breathing-slit, the triumph of Tryggveson proclaiming itself by Tryggveson's own lips, who had mounted a big boulder near by and was victoriously speaking to the people, winding up with a promise of honours and rewards to whoever should bring him wicked old Hakon's head. Wretched Hakon, justly suspecting his slave, tried to at least keep himself awake. Slave did keep himself awake till Hakon dozed or slept, then swiftly cut off Hakon's head, and plunged out with it to the presence of Tryggveson. Tryggveson, detesting the traitor, useful as the treachery was, cut off the slave's head too, had it hung up along with Hakon's on the pinnacle of the Lade Gallows, where the populace pelted both heads with stones and many curses, especially the more important of the two. 'Hakon the Bad' ever henceforth, instead of Hakon the Rich.

This was the end of Hakon Jarl, the last support of heathenry in Norway, among other characteristics he had :

a strong-handed, hard-headed, very relentless, greedy and wicked being. He is reckoned to have ruled in Norway, or mainly ruled, either in the struggling or triumphant state, for about thirty years (965-95?). He and his seemed to have formed, by chance rather than design, the chief opposition which the Haarfagr posterity throughout its whole course experienced in Norway. Such the cost to them of killing good Jarl Sigurd, in Greyfell's time! For 'curses, like chickens,' do sometimes visibly 'come home to feed,' as they always, either visibly or else invisibly, are punctually sure to do.

Hakon Jarl is considerably connected with the *Farðer Saga*; often mentioned there, and comes out perfectly in character; an altogether worldly-wise man of the roughest type, not without a turn for practicality of kindness to those who would really be of use to him. His tendencies to magic also are not forgotten.

Hakon left two sons, Eric and Svein, often also mentioned in this Saga. On their father's death they fled to Sweden, to Denmark, and were busy stirring up troubles in those countries against Olaf Tryggveson; till at length, by a favourable combination, under their auspices chiefly, they got his brief and noble reign put an end to. Nay, furthermore, Jarl Eric left sons, especially an elder son, named also Eric, who proved a sore affliction, and a continual stone of stumbling to a new generation of Haarfags, and so continued the curse of Sigurd's murder upon them.

Towards the end of this Hakon's reign it was that the discovery of America took place (985). Actual discovery, it appears, by Eric the Red, an Iclander; concerning which there has been abundant investigation and discussion in our time. *Ginnungagap* (Roaring Abyss) is thought to be the

mouth of Behring's Straits in Baffin's Bay; *Big Helloland*, the coast from Cape Walsingham to near Newfoundland; *Little Helloland*, Newfoundland itself. *Markland* was Lower Canada, New Brunswick, and Novia Scotia. Southward thence to Chesapeak Bay was called *Wine Land* (wild grapes still grow in Rhode Island, and more luxuriantly further south). *White Man's Land*, called also *Great Ireland*, is supposed to mean the two Carolinas, down to the Southern Cape of Florida. In Dahlmann's opinion, the Irish themselves might even pretend to have probably been the first discoverers of America; they had evidently got to Iceland itself before the Norse exiles found it out. It appears to be certain that, from the end of the tenth century to the early part of the fourteenth, there was a dim knowledge of those distant shores extant in the Norse mind, and even some straggling series of visits thither by roving Norsemen; though, as only danger, difficulty, and no profit resulted, the visits ceased, and the whole matter sank into oblivion, and, but for the Icelandic talent of writing in the long winter nights, would never have been heard of by posterity at all.

CHAPTER VII

REIGN OF OLAF TRYGGVESON.

OLAF TRYGGVESON (A.D. 995-1000) also makes a great figure in the *Faröer Saga*, and recounts there his early troubles, which were strange and many. He is still reckoned a grand hero of the North, though his *vates* now is only Snorro Sturleson of Iceland. Tryggveson had indeed many adventures in the world. His poor mother, Astrid, was obliged to fly, on murder of her husband by Gunhild,—to fly for life, three months before he, her little Olaf, was born. She lay concealed in reedy islands, fled through trackless forests; reached her father's with the little baby in her arms, and lay deep-hidden there, tended only by her father himself; Gunhild's pursuit being so incessant, and keen as with sleuth-hounds. Poor Astrid had to fly again, deviously to Sweden, to Esthland (Esthonia), to Russia. In Esthland she was sold as a slave, quite parted from her boy,—who also was sold, and again sold; but did at last fall in with a kinsman high in the Russian service; did from him find redemption and help, and so rose, in a distinguished manner, to manhood, victorious self-help, and recovery of his kingdom at last. He even met his mother again, he as king of Norway, she as one wonderfully lifted out of darkness into new life and happiness still in store.

Grown to manhood, Tryggveson,—now become acquainted with his birth, and with his, alas, hopeless claims,—left Russia for the one profession open to him, that of sea-

robbery; and did feats without number in that questionable line in many seas and scenes,—in England latterly, and most conspicuously of all. In one of his courses thither, after long labours in the Hebrides, Man, Wales, and down the western shores to the very Land's End and farther, he paused at the Scilly Islands for a little while. He was told of a wonderful Christian hermit living strangely in these sea-solitudes; had the curiosity to seek him out, examine, question, and discourse with him; and, after some reflection, accepted Christian baptism from the venerable man. In *Snorro* the story is involved in miracle, rumour, and fable; but the fact itself seems certain, and is very interesting; the great, wild, noble soul of fierce Olaf opening to this wonderful gospel of tidings from beyond the world, tidings which infinitely transcended all else he had ever heard or dreamt of! It seems certain he was baptised here; date not fixable; shortly before poor heart-broken Dunstan's death, or shortly after; most English churches, monasteries especially, lying burnt, under continual visitation of the Danes. Olaf, such baptism notwithstanding, did not quit his viking profession; indeed, what other was there for him in the world as yet?

We mentioned his occasional copartneries with Svein of the Double-beard, now become King of Denmark, but the greatest of these, and the alone interesting at this time, is their joint invasion of England, and Tryggveson's exploits and fortunes there some years after that adventure of baptism in the Scilly Isles. Svein and he 'were above a year in England together,' this time: they steered up the Thames with three hundred ships and many fighters; siege, or at least furious assault, of London was their first or main enterprise, but it did not succeed. The Saxon Chronicle

gives date to it, A.D. 994, and names expressly, as Svein's co-partner, 'Olaus, king of Norway,'—which he was as yet far from being; but in regard to the Year of Grace the Saxon Chronicle is to be held indisputable, and, indeed, has the field to itself in this matter. Famed Olaf Tryggveson, seen visibly at the siege of London, year 994, it throws a kind of momentary light to us over that disastrous whirlpool of miseries and confusions, all dark and painful to the fancy otherwise! This big voyage and furious siege of London is Svein Double-beard's first real attempt to fulfil that vow of his at Father Blue-tooth's 'funeral ale,' and conquer England,—which it is a pity he could not yet do. Had London now fallen to him, it is pretty evident all England must have followed, and poor England, with Svein as king over it, been delivered from immeasurable woes, which had to last some two-and-twenty years farther, before this result could be arrived at. But finding London impregnable for the moment (no ship able to get athwart the bridge, and many Danes perishing in the attempt to do it by swimming), Svein and Olaf turned to other enterprises; all England in a manner lying open to them, turn which way they liked. They burnt and plundered over Kent, over Hampshire, Sussex; they stormed far and wide; world lying all before them where to choose. Wretched Ethelred, as the one invention he could fall upon, offered them Danegelt (16,000*l.* of silver this year, but it rose in other years as high as 48,000*l.*); the desperate Ethelred, a clear method of quenching fire by pouring *oil* on it! Svein and Olaf accepted; withdrew to Southampton,—Olaf at least did,—till the money was got ready. Strange to think of, fierce Svein of the Double-beard, and conquest of England by him; this had at last become the one salutary result which remained

for that distracted, down-trodden, now utterly chaotic and anarchic country. A conquering Svein, followed by an ably and earnestly administrative, as well as conquering, Knut (whom Dahlmann compares to Charlemagne), were thus by the mysterious destinies appointed the effective saviours of England.

Tryggveson, on this occasion, was a good while at Southampton; and roamed extensively about, easily victorious over everything, if resistance were attempted, but finding little or none; and acting now in a peaceable or even friendly capacity. In the Southampton country he came in contact with the then Bishop of Winchester, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, excellent Elphegus, still dimly decipherable to us as a man of great natural discernment, piety, and inborn veracity; a hero-soul, probably of real brotherhood with Olaf's own. He even made court visits to King Ethelred; one visit to him at Andover of a very serious nature. By Elphegus, as we can discover, he was introduced into the real depths of the Christian faith. Elphegus, with due solemnity of apparatus, in presence of the king, at Andover, baptised Olaf anew, and to him Olaf engaged that he would never plunder in England any more; which promise, too, he kept. In fact, not long after, Svein's conquest of England being in an evidently forward state, Tryggveson (having made, withal, a great English or Irish marriage,—a dowager Princess, who had voluntarily fallen in love with him,—see *Snorro* for this fine romantic fact!) mainly resided in our island for two or three years, or else in Dublin, in the precincts of the Danish Court there in the Sister Isle. Accordingly it was in Dublin, as above noted, that Hakon's spy found him; and from the Liffey that his squadron sailed, through the Hebrides, through the Ork-

neys, plundering and baptising in their strange way, towards such success as we have seen.

Tryggveson made a stout, and, in effect, victorious and glorious struggle for himself as king. Daily and hourly vigilant to do so, often enough by soft and even merry methods,—for he was a witty, jocund man, and had a fine ringing laugh in him, and clear pregnant words ever ready,—or if soft methods would not serve, then by hard and even hardest he put down a great deal of miscellaneous anarchy in Norway; was especially busy against heathenism (devil-worship and its rites): this, indeed, may be called the focus and heart of all his royal endeavour in Norway, and of all the troubles he now had with his people there. For this was a serious, vital, all-comprehending matter; devil-worship, a thing not to be tolerated one moment longer than you could by any method help! Olaf's success was intermittent, of varying complexion; but his effort, swift or slow, was strong and continual; and on the whole he did succeed. Take a sample or two of that wonderful conversion process:

At one of his first Things he found the Bonders all assembled in arms; resolute to the death seemingly, against his proposal and him. Tryggveson said little; waited impassive, "What your reasons are, good men?" One zealous Bonder started up in passionate parliamentary eloquence; but after a sentence or two, broke down; one, and then another, and still another, and remained all three staring in open-mouthed silence there! The peasant-proprietors accepted the phenomenon as ludicrous, perhaps partly as miraculous withal, and consented to baptism this time.

On another occasion of a Thing, which had assembled

near some heathen temple to meet him,—temple where Hakon Jarl had done much repairing, and set up many idol figures and sumptuous ornaments, regardless of expense, especially a very big and splendid Thor, with massive gold collar round the neck of him, not the like of it in Norway,—King Olaf Tryggveson was clamorously invited by the Bonders to step in there, enlighten his eyes, and partake of the sacred rites. Instead of which he rushed into the temple with his armed men; smashed down, with his own battle-axe, the god Thor, prostrate on the ground at one stroke, to set an example; and, in a few minutes, had the whole Hakon Pantheon wrecked; packing up meanwhile all the gold and precious things accumulated there (not forgetting Thor's illustrious gold collar, of which we shall hear again), and victoriously took the plunder home with him for his own royal uses and behoof of the state.

In other cases, though a friend to strong measures, he had to hold in, and await the favourable moment. Thus once, in beginning a parliamentary address, so soon as he came to touch upon Christianity, the Bonders rose in murmurs, in vociferations and jingling of arms, which quite drowned the royal voice; declared, they had taken arms against king Hakon the Good to compel him to desist from his Christian proposals; and they did not think king Olaf a higher man than him (Hakon the Good). The king then said, 'He proposed coming to them next Yule to their great sacrificial feast, to see for himself what their customs were,' which pacified the Bonders for this time. The appointed place of meeting was again a Hakon-Jarl Temple, not yet done to ruin; chief shrine in those Trondhjem parts, I believe: there should Tryggveson appear at Yule. Well, but before Yule came, Tryggveson made a great banquet in his palace at

Trondhjem, and invited far and wide, all manner of important persons out of the district as guests there. Banquet hardly done, Tryggveson gave some slight signal, upon which armed men strode in, seized eleven of these principal persons, and the king said: "Since he himself was to become a heathen again, and do sacrifice, it was his purpose to do it in the highest form, namely, that of Human Sacrifice; and this time not of slaves and malefactors, but of the best men in the country!" In which stringent circumstances the eleven seized persons, and company at large, gave unanimous consent to baptism; straightway received the same, and abjured their idols; but were not permitted to go home till they had left, in sons, brothers, and other precious relatives, sufficient hostages in the king's hands.

By unwearied industry of this and better kinds, Tryggveson had trampled down idolatry, so far as form went,—how far in substance may be greatly doubted. But it is to be remembered withal, that always on the back of these compulsory adventures there followed English bishops, priests and preachers; whereby to the open-minded, conviction, to all degrees of it, was attainable, while silence and passivity became the duty or necessity of the unconvinced party.

In about two years Norway was all gone over with a rough harrow of conversion. Heathenism at least constrained to be silent and outwardly conformable. Tryggveson next turned his attention to Iceland, sent one Thangbrand, priest from Saxony, of wonderful qualities, military as well as theological, to try and convert Iceland. Thangbrand made a few converts; for Olaf had already many estimable Iceland friends, whom he liked much, and was much liked by; and conversion was the ready road to his favour. Thangbrand, I find, lodged with Hall of Sida (familiar acquaintance of

'Burnt Njal,' whose Saga has its admirers among us even now). Thangbrand converted Hall and one or two other leading men; but in general he was reckoned quarrelsome and blustering rather than eloquent and piously convincing. Two skalds of repute made biting lampoons upon Thangbrand, whom Thangbrand, by two opportunities that offered, cut down and did to death because of their skaldic quality. Another he killed with his own hand, I know not for what reason. In brief, after about a year, Thangbrand returned to Norway and king Olaf; declaring the Icelanders to be a perverse, satirical, and inconvertible people, having himself, the record says, 'been the death of three men there.' King Olaf was in high rage at this result; but was persuaded by the Icelanders about him to try farther, and by a milder instrument. He accordingly chose one Thormod, a pious, patient, and kindly man, who, within the next year or so, did actually accomplish the matter; namely, get Christianity, by open vote, declared at Thingvalla by the general Thing of Iceland there; the roar of a big thunder-clap at the right moment rather helping the conclusion, if I recollect. Whereupon Olaf's joy was no doubt great.

One general result of these successful operations was the discontent, to all manner of degrees, on the part of many Norse individuals, against this glorious and victorious, but peremptory and terrible king of theirs. Tryggveson, I fancy, did not much regard all that; a man of joyful, cheery temper, habitually contemptuous of danger. Another trivial misfortune that befell in these conversion operations, and became important to him, he did not even know of, and would have much despised if he had. It was this: Sigrid, queen dowager of Sweden, thought to be amongst the most shining women of the world, was also known for one of the most imperious,

revengeful, and relentless, and had got for herself the name of Sigrid the Proud. In her high widowhood she had naturally many wooers; but treated them in a manner unexampled. Two of her suitors, a simultaneous Two, were, King Harald Grænske (a cousin of King Tryggveson's, and kind of king in some district, by sufferance of the late Hakon's),—this luckless Grænske and the then Russian Sovereign as well, name not worth mentioning, were zealous suitors of Queen Dowager Sigrid, and were perversely slow to accept the negative, which in her heart was inexorable for both, though the expression of it could not be quite so emphatic. By ill-luck for them they came once,—from the far West, Grænske; from the far East, the Russian;—and arrived both together at Sigrid's court, to prosecute their importunate, and to her odious and tiresome suit; much, how very much, to her impatience and disdain. She lodged them both in some old mansion, which she had contiguous, and got compendiously furnished for them; and there, I know not whether on the first or on the second, or on what following night, this unparalleled Queen Sigrid had the house surrounded, set on fire, and the two suitors and their people burnt to ashes! No more of bother from these two at least! This appears to be a fact; and it could not be unknown to Tryggveson.

In spite of which, however, there went from Tryggveson, who was now a widower, some incipient marriage proposals to this proud widow; by whom they were favourably received; as from the brightest man in all the world, they might seem worth being. Now, in one of these anti-heathen onslaughts of King Olaf's on the idol temples of Hakon—(I think it was that case where Olaf's own battle-axe struck down the monstrous refulgent Thor, and conquered an im-

mense gold ring from the neck of him, or from the door of his temple),—a huge gold ring, at any rate, had come into Olaf's hands; and this he bethought him might be a pretty present to Queen Sigrid, the now favourable, though the proud. Sigrid received the ring with joy; fancied what a collar it would make for her own fair neck; but noticed that her two goldsmiths, weighing it on their fingers, exchanged a glance. "What is that?" exclaimed Queen Sigrid. "Nothing," answered they, or endeavoured to answer, dreading mischief. But Sigrid compelled them to break open the ring; and there was found, all along the inside of it, an occult ring of copper, not a heart of gold at all! "Ha," said the proud Queen, flinging it away, "he that could deceive in this matter can deceive in many others!" And was in hot wrath with Olaf; though, by degrees, again she took milder thoughts.

Milder thoughts, we say; and consented to a meeting next autumn, at some half-way station, where their great business might be brought to a happy settlement and betrothment. Both Olaf Tryggveson and the high dowager appear to have been tolerably of willing mind at this meeting; but Olaf interposed, what was always one condition with him, "Thou must consent to baptism, and give up thy idol-gods." "They are the gods of all my forefathers," answered the lady; "choose thou what gods thou pleasest, but leave me mine." Whereupon an altercation; and Tryggveson, as was his wont, towered up into shining wrath, and exclaimed at last, "Why should I care about thee then, old faded heathen creature?" And impatiently wagging his glove, hit her, or slightly switched her, on the face with it, and contemptuously turning away, walked out of the adventure. "This is a feat that may cost thee dear one day," said Sigrid. And in the

end it came to do so, little as the magnificent Olaf deigned to think of it at the moment.

One of the last scuffles I remember of Olaf's having with his refractory heathens, was at a Thing in Hordaland or Rogaland, far in the North, where the chief opposition hero was one Jaernskaegg ('ironbeard,' *Scottice* 'Airn-shag,' as it were!). Here again was a grand heathen temple, Hakon Jarl's building, with a splendid Thor in it and much idol furniture. The king stated what was his constant wish here as elsewhere, but had no sooner entered upon the subject of Christianity than universal murmur, rising into clangour and violent dissent, interrupted him, and Ironbeard took up the discourse in reply. Ironbeard did not break down; on the contrary, he, with great brevity, emphasis, and clearness, signified "that the proposal to reject their old gods was in the highest degree unacceptable to this Thing; that it was contrary to bargain, withal; so that if it were insisted on, they would have to fight with the king about it; and in fact were now ready to do so." In reply to this, Olaf, without word uttered, but merely with some signal to the trusty armed men he had with him, rushed off to the temple close at hand; burst into it, shutting the door behind him; smashed Thor and Co. to destruction; then reappearing victorious, found much confusion outside, and, in particular, what was a most important item, the rugged Ironbeard done to death by Olaf's men in the interim. Which entirely disheartened the Thing from fighting at that moment; having now no leader who dared to head them in so dangerous an enterprise. So that every one departed to digest his rage in silence as he could.

Matters having cooled for a week or two, there was another Thing held; in which King Olaf testified regret for

the quarrel that had fallen out, readiness to pay what *mulct* was due by law for that unlucky homicide of Ironbeard by his people; and, withal, to take the fair daughter of Ironbeard to wife, if all would comply and be friends with him in other matters; which was the course resolved on as most convenient: accept baptism, we; marry Jaernskaegg's daughter, you. This bargain held on both sides. The wedding, too, was celebrated, but that took rather a strange turn. On the morning of the bride-night, Olaf, who had not been sleeping, though his fair partner thought he had, opened his eyes, and saw, with astonishment, the fair partner aiming a long knife ready to strike home upon him! Which at once ended their wedded life; poor Demoiselle Ironbeard immediately bundling off with her attendants home again; King Olaf into the apartment of his servants, mentioning there what had happened, and forbidding any of them to follow her.

Olaf Tryggveson, though his kingdom was the smallest of the Norse Three, had risen to a renown over all the Norse world, which neither he of Denmark nor he of Sweden could pretend to rival. A magnificent, far-shining man; more expert in all 'bodily exercises' as the Norse called them, than any man had ever been before him, or after was. Could keep five daggers in the air, always catching the proper fifth by its handle, and sending it aloft again; could shoot supremely, throw a javelin with either hand; and, in fact, in battle usually threw two together. These, with swimming, climbing, leaping, were the then admirable Fine Arts of the North; in all which Tryggveson appears to have been the Raphael and the Michael Angelo at once. Essentially definable, too, if we look well into him, as a wild bit of real heroism, in such rude guise and environment; a high, true,

and great human soul. A jovial burst of laughter in him, withal; a bright, airy, wise way of speech; dressed beautifully and with care; a man admired and loved exceedingly by those he liked; dreaded as death by those he did not like. 'Hardly any king,' says Snorro, 'was ever so well obeyed; by one class out of zeal and love, by the rest out of dread.' His glorious course, however, was not to last long.

King Svein of the Double-Beard had not yet completed his conquest of England,—by no means yet, some thirteen horrid years of that still before him!—when, over in Denmark, he found that complaints against him and intricacies had arisen, on the part principally of one Burislav, King of the Wends (far up the Baltic), and in a less degree with the King of Sweden and other minor individuals. Svein earnestly applied himself to settle these, and have his hands free. Burislav, an aged heathen gentleman, proved reasonable and conciliatory; so, too, the King of Sweden, and Dowager Queen Sigrid, his managing mother. Bargain in both these cases got sealed and crowned by marriage. Svein, who had become a widower lately, now wedded Sigrid; and might think, possibly enough, he had got a proud bargain, though a heathen one. Burislav also insisted on marriage with Princess Thyri, the Double-Beard's sister. Thyri, inexpressibly disinclined to wed an aged heathen of that stamp, pleaded hard with her brother; but the Double-Bearded was inexorable; Thyri's wailings and entreaties went for nothing. With some guardian foster-brother, and a serving-maid or two, she had to go on this hated journey. Old Burislav, at sight of her, blazed out into marriage-feast of supreme magnificence, and was charmed to see her; but Thyri would not join the marriage party; refused to eat

with it or sit with it at all. Day after day, for six days, flatly refused; and after nightfall of the sixth, glided out with her foster-brother into the woods, into by-paths and inconceivable wanderings; and, in effect, got home to Denmark. Brother Svein was not for the moment there; probably enough gone to England again. But Thyri knew too well he would not allow her to stay here, or anywhere that he could help, except with the old heathen she had just fled from.

Thyri, looking round the world, saw no likely road for her, but to Olaf Tryggveson in Norway; to beg protection from the most heroic man she knew of in the world. Olaf, except by renown, was not known to her; but by renown he well was. Olaf, at sight of her, promised protection and asylum against all mortals. Nay, in discoursing with Thyri Olaf perceived more and more clearly what a fine handsome being, soul and body, Thyri was; and in a short space of time winded up by proposing marriage to Thyri; who, humbly, and we may fancy with what secret joy, consented to say yes, and become Queen of Norway. In the due months they had a little son, Harald; who, it is credibly recorded, was the joy of both his parents; but who, to their inexpressible sorrow, in about a year died, and vanished from them. This, and one other fact, now to be mentioned, is all the wedded history we have of Thyri.

The other fact is, that Thyri had, by inheritance or covenant, not depending on her marriage with old Burislav, considerable properties in Wendland; which, she often reflected, might be not a little behoveful to her here in Norway, where her civil-list was probably but straitened. She spoke of this to her husband; but her husband would take no hold, merely made her gifts, and said, "Pooh, pooh, can't

we live without old Burislav and his Wendland properties?" So that the lady sank into ever deeper anxiety and eagerness about this Wendland object; took to weeping; sat weeping whole days; and when Olaf asked, "What ails thee, then?" would answer, or did answer once, "What a different man my father Harald Gormson was" (vulgarly called Blue-tooth), "compared with some that are now kings! For no King Svein in the world would Harald Gormson have given up his own or his wife's just rights!" Whereupon Tryggveson started up, exclaiming in some heat, "Of thy brother Svein I never was afraid; if Svein and I meet in contest, it will not be Svein, I believe, that conquers;" and went off in a towering fume. Consented, however, at last, had to consent, to get his fine fleet equipped and armed, and decide to sail with it to Wendland to have speech and settlement with King Burislav.

Tryggveson had already ships and navies that were the wonder of the North. Especially in building war ships,—the Crane, the Serpent, last of all the Long Serpent,¹—he had, for size, for outward beauty, and inward perfection of equipment, transcended all example.

This new sea expedition became an object of attention to all neighbours; especially Queen Sigrid the Proud and Svein Double-Beard, her now king, were attentive to it.

"This insolent Tryggveson," Queen Sigrid would often say, and had long been saying, to her Svein, "to marry thy sister without leave had or asked of thee; and now flaunting forth his war navies, as if he, king only of paltry Norway, were the big hero of the North! Why do you suffer it, you kings really great?"

¹ His Long Serpent, judged by some to be of the size of a frigate of forty-five guns (Laing).

By such persuasions and reiterations, King Svein of Denmark, King Olaf of Sweden, and Jarl Eric, now a great man there, grown rich by prosperous sea robbery and other good management, were brought to take the matter up, and combine strenuously for destruction of King Olaf Tryggveson on this grand Wendland expedition of his. Fleets and forces were with best diligence got ready; and, withal, a certain Jarl Sigwald, of Jomsburg, chieftain of the Jomsvikings, a powerful, plausible, and cunning man, was appointed to find means of joining himself to Tryggveson's grand voyage, of getting into Tryggveson's confidence, and keeping Svein Double-Beard, Eric, and the Swedish King aware of all his movements.

King Olaf Tryggveson, unacquainted with all this, sailed away in summer, with his splendid fleet; went through the Belts with prosperous winds, under bright skies, to the admiration of both shores. Such a fleet, with its shining Serpents, long and short, and perfection of equipment and appearance, the Baltic never saw before. Jarl Sigwald joined with new ships by the way: "Had," he too, "a visit to King Burislav to pay; how could he ever do it in better company?" and studiously and skilfully ingratiated himself with King Olaf. Old Burislav, when they arrived, proved altogether courteous, handsome, and amenable; agreed at once to Olaf's claims for his now queen, did the rites of hospitality with a generous plenitude to Olaf; who cheerily renewed acquaintance with that country, known to him in early days (the cradle of his fortunes in the viking line), and found old friends there still surviving, joyful to meet him again. Jarl Sigwald encouraged these delays, King Svein and Co. not being yet quite ready. "Get ready!" Sigwald directed them, and they diligently did. Olaf's men, their business now

done, were impatient to be home; and grudged every day of loitering there; but, till Sigwald pleased, such his power of flattering and cajoling Tryggveson, they could not get away.

At length, Sigwald's secret messengers reporting all ready on the part of Svein and Co., Olaf took farewell of Burislav and Wendland, and all gladly sailed away. Svein, Eric, and the Swedish king, with their combined fleets, lay in wait behind some cape in a safe little bay of some island, then called Svolde, but not in our time to be found; the Baltic tumults in the fourteenth century having swallowed it, as some think, and leaving us uncertain whether it was in the neighbourhood of Rügen Island or in the Sound of Elsinore. There lay Svein, Eric, and Co. waiting till Tryggveson and his fleet came up, Sigwald's spy messengers daily reporting what progress he and it had made. At length, one bright summer morning, the fleet made appearance, sailing in loose order, Sigwald, as one acquainted with the shoal places, steering ahead, and showing them the way.

Snorro rises into one of his pictorial fits, seized with enthusiasm at the thought of such a fleet, and reports to us largely in what order Tryggveson's winged Coursers of the Deep, in long series, for perhaps an hour or more, came on, and what the three potentates, from their knoll of vantage, said of each as it hove in sight. Svein thrice over guessed this and the other noble vessel to be the Long Serpent; Eric always correcting him, "No, that is not the Long Serpent yet" (and *aside* always), "Nor shall you be lord of it, king, when it does come." The Long Serpent itself did make appearance. Eric, Svein, and the Swedish king hurried on board, and pushed out of their hiding-place into the open sea. Treacherous Sigwald, at the beginning of all this,

had suddenly doubled that cape of theirs, and struck into the bay out of sight, leaving the foremost Tryggveson ships astonished, and uncertain what to do, if it were not simply to strike sail and wait till Olaf himself with the Long Serpent arrived.

Olaf's chief captains, seeing the enemy's huge fleet come out, and how the matter lay, strongly advised King Olaf to elude this stroke of treachery, and, with all sail, hold on his course, fight being now on so unequal terms. Snorro says, the king, high on the quarter-deck where he stood, replied, "Strike the sails; never shall men of mine think of flight. I never fled from battle. Let God dispose of my life; but flight I will never take." And so the battle arrangements immediately began, and the battle with all fury went loose; and lasted hour after hour, till almost sunset, if I well recollect. "Olaf stood on the Serpent's quarter-deck," says Snorro, "high over the others. He had a gilt shield and a helmet inlaid with gold; over his armour he had a short red coat, and was easily distinguished from other men." Snorro's account of the battle is altogether animated, graphic, and so minute that antiquaries gather from it, if so disposed (which we but little are), what the methods of Norse sea-fighting were; their shooting of arrows, casting of javelins, pitching of big stones, ultimately boarding, and mutual clashing and smashing, which it would not avail us to speak of here. Olaf stood conspicuous all day, throwing javelins, of deadly aim, with both hands at once; encouraging, fighting and commanding like a highest sea-king.

The Danish fleet, the Swedish fleet, were, both of them, quickly dealt with, and successively withdrew out of shot-range. And then Jarl Eric came up, and fiercely grappled with the Long Serpent, or, rather, with her surrounding

comrades; and gradually, as they were beaten empty of men, with the Long Serpent herself. The fight grew ever fiercer, more furious. Eric was supplied with new men from the Swedes and Danes; Olaf had no such resource, except from the crews of his own beaten ships, and at length this also failed him; all his ships, except the Long Serpent, being beaten and emptied. Olaf fought on unyielding. Eric twice boarded him, was twice repulsed. Olaf kept his quarter-deck; unconquerable, though left now more and more hopeless, fatally short of help. A tall young man, called Einar Tamberskelver, very celebrated and important afterwards in Norway, and already the best archer known, kept busy with his bow. Twice he nearly shot Jarl Eric in his ship. "Shoot me that man," said Jarl Eric to a bowman near him; and, just as Tamberskelver was drawing his bow the third time, an arrow hit it in the middle and broke it in two. "What is this that has broken?" asked King Olaf. "Norway from thy hand, king," answered Tamberskelver. Tryggveson's men, he observed with surprise, were striking violently on Eric's; but to no purpose; nobody fell. "How is this?" asked Tryggveson. "Our swords are notched and blunted, king; they do not cut." Olaf stepped down to his arm-chest; delivered out new swords; and it was observed as he did it, blood ran trickling from his wrist; but none knew where the wound was. Eric boarded a third time. Olaf, left with hardly more than one man, sprang overboard (one sees that red coat of his still glancing in the evening sun), and sank in the deep waters to his long rest.

Rumour ran among his people that he still was not dead; grounding on some movement by the ships of that traitorous Sigwald, they fancied Olaf had dived beneath the keels of his enemies, and got away with Sigwald, as Sigwald himself

evidently did. 'Much was hoped, supposed, spoken,' says one old mourning Skald; 'but the truth was, Olaf Tryggvesson was never seen in Norseland more.' Strangely he remains still a shining figure to us; the wildly beautifullest man, in body and in soul, that one has ever heard of in the North.

CHAPTER VIII.

JARLS ERIC AND SVEIN.

JARL ERIC, splendent with this victory, not to speak of that over the Jomsburgers with his father long ago, was now made Governor of Norway: Governor or quasi-sovereign, with his brother, Jarl Svein, as partner, who, however, took but little hand in governing;—and, under the patronage of Svein Double-Beard and the then Swedish king (Olaf his name, Sigrid the Proud, his mother's), administered it, they say, with skill and prudence for above fourteen years. Tryggveson's death is understood and laboriously computed to have happened in the year 1000; but there is no exact chronology in these things, but a continual uncertain guessing after such; so that one eye in History as regards them is as if put out;—neither indeed have I yet had the luck to find any decipherable and intelligible map of Norway: so that the other eye of History is much blinded withal, and her path through those wild regions and epochs is an extremely dim and chaotic one. An evil that much demands remedying, and especially wants some first attempt at remedying, by inquirers into English History; the whole period from Egbert, the first Saxon King of England, on to Edward the Confessor, the last, being everywhere completely interwoven with that of their mysterious, continually-invasive 'Danes,' as they call them, and inextricably unintelligible till these also get to be a little understood, and cease to be utterly dark, hideous, and mythical to us as they now are.

King Olaf Tryggveson is the first Norseman who is expressly mentioned to have been in England by our English History books, new or old; and of him it is merely said that he had an interview with King Ethelred II. at Andover, of a pacific and friendly nature,—though it is absurdly added that the noble Olaf was converted to Christianity by that extremely stupid Royal Person. Greater contrast in an interview than in this at Andover, between heroic Olaf Tryggveson and Ethelred the forever Unready, was not perhaps seen in the terrestrial Planet that day. Olaf, or ‘Olaus.’ or ‘Anlaf,’ as they name him, did ‘engage on oath to Ethelred not to invade England any more,’ and kept his promise, they farther say. Essentially a truth, as we already know, though the circumstances were all different; and the promise was to a devout High Priest, not to a crowned Blockhead and cowardly Do-nothing. One other ‘Olaus’ I find mentioned in our Books, two or three centuries before, at a time when there existed no such individual; not to speak of several Anlafs, who sometimes seem to mean Olaf, and still oftener to mean nobody possible. Which occasions not a little obscurity in our early History, says the learned Selden. A thing remediable, too, in which, if any Englishman of due genius (or even capacity for standing labour), who understood the Icelandic and Anglo-Saxon languages, would engage in it, he might do a great deal of good, and bring the matter into a comparatively lucid state. Vain aspirations,—or perhaps not altogether vain.

At the time of Olaf Tryggveson’s death, and indeed long before, King Svein Double-Beard had always for chief enterprise the Conquest of England, and followed it by fits with extreme violence and impetus; often advancing largely towards a successful conclusion; but never, for thirteen years

yet, getting it concluded. He possessed long since all England north of Watling Street. That is to say, Northumberland, East Anglia (naturally full of Danish settlers by this time), were fixedly his; Mercia, his oftener than not; Wessex itself, with all the coasts, he was free to visit, and to burn and rob in at discretion. There or elsewhere, Ethelred the Unready had no battle in him whatever; and, for a forty years after the beginning of his reign, England excelled in anarchic stupidity, murderous devastation, utter misery, platitude, and sluggish contemptibility, all the countries one has read of. Apparently a very opulent country, too; a ready skill in such arts and fine arts as there were; Svein's very ships, they say, had their gold dragons, top-mast pennons, and other metallic splendours generally wrought for them in England. 'Unexampled prosperity' in the manufacture way not unknown there, it would seem! But co-existing with such spiritual bankruptcy as was also unexampled, one would hope. Read *Lupus* (Wulfstan), Archbishop of York's amazing *Sermon* on the subject,¹ addressed to contemporary audiences; setting forth such a state of things,—sons selling their fathers, mothers, and sisters as Slaves to the Danish robber; themselves living in debauchery, blustering gluttony, and depravity; the details of which are well-nigh incredible, though clearly stated as things generally known,—the humour of these poor wretches sunk to a state of what we may call greasy desperation, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." The manner in which they treated their own English nuns, if young, good-looking, and captive to the Danes; buying them on a kind of brutish or subter-brutish 'Greatest Happiness Prin-

¹ This sermon was printed by Hearne; and is given also by Langebek in his excellent Collection, *Rerum Danicarum Scriptores Medii Ævi*. Hafniæ, 1772-1834.

ciple' (for the moment), and by a Joint-Stock arrangement, far transcends all human speech or imagination, and awakens in one the momentary red-hot thought, The Danes have served you right, ye accursed! The so-called soldiers, one finds, made not the least fight anywhere; could make none, led and guided as they were: and the 'Generals,' often enough traitors, always ignorant, and blockheads, were in the habit, when expressly commanded to fight, of taking physic, and declaring that nature was incapable of castor-oil and battle both at once. This ought to be explained a little to the modern English and their War-Secretaries, who undertake the conduct of armies. The undeniable fact is, defeat on defeat was the constant fate of the English; during these forty years not one battle in which they were not beaten. No gleam of victory or real resistance till the noble Edmund Ironside (whom it is always strange to me how such an Ethelred could produce for son) made his appearance and ran his brief course, like a great and far-seen meteor, soon extinguished without result. No remedy for England in that base time, but yearly asking the victorious, plundering, burning and murdering Danes, 'How much money will you take to go away?' Thirty thousand pounds in silver, which the annual *Danegelt* soon rose to, continued to be about the average yearly sum, though generally on the increasing hand; in the last year I think it had risen to seventy-two thousand pounds in silver, raised yearly by a tax (Income-Tax of its kind, rudely levied), the worst of all remedies, good for the day only. Nay, there was one remedy still worse, which the miserable Ethelred once tried: that of massacring 'all the Danes settled in England' (practically, of a few thousands or hundreds of them), by treachery and a kind of Sicilian Vespers. Which issued, as such

things usually do, in terrible monition to you not to try the like again! Issued, namely, in redoubled fury on the Danish part; new fiercer invasion by Svein's Jarl Thorkel; then by Svein himself; which latter drove the miserable Ethelred, with wife and family, into Normandy, to wife's brother, the then Duke there; and ended that miserable struggle by Svein's becoming King of England himself. Of this disgraceful massacre, which it would appear has been immensely exaggerated in the English books, we can happily give the exact date (A.D. 1002); and also of Svein's victorious accession (A.D. 1013),²—pretty much the only benefit one gets out of contemplating such a set of objects.

King Svein's first act was to levy a terribly increased Income-Tax for the payment of his army. Svein was levying it with a stronghanded diligence, but had not yet done levying it, when, at Gainsborough one night, he suddenly died; smitten dead, once used to be said, by St. Edmund, whilom murdered King of the East Angles; who could not bear to see his shrine and monastery of St. Edmundsbury plundered by the Tyrant's tax-collectors, as they were on the point of being. In all ways impossible, however,—Edmund's own death did not occur till two years after Svein's. Svein's death, by whatever cause, befell 1014; his fleet then lying in the Humber; and only Knut,³ his eldest son (hardly yet eighteen, count some), in charge of it; who, on short counsel, and arrangement about this questionable kingdom of his, lifted anchor; made for Sandwich, a safer station at the moment; 'cut off the feet and noses' (one shudders, and hopes Not, there being some discrepancy about it!) of his numerous hostages that had been delivered

² Kennet, i. 67; Rapin, i. 119, 121 (from the *Saxon Chronicle* both).

³ Knut born A.D. 988 according to Munch's calculation (ii. 126).

to King Svein; set them ashore;—and made for Denmark, his natural storehouse and stronghold, as the hopefulest first-thing he could do.

Knut soon returned from Denmark, with increase of force sufficient for the English problem; which latter he now ended in a victorious, and essentially, for himself and chaotic England, beneficent manner. Became widely known by and by, there and elsewhere, as Knut the Great; and is thought by judges of our day to have really merited that title. A most nimble, sharp-striking, clear-thinking, prudent and effective man, who regulated this dismembered and distracted England in its Church matters, in its State matters, like a real King. Had a Standing Army (*House Carles*), who were well paid, well drilled and disciplined, capable of instantly quenching insurrection or breakage of the peace; and piously endeavoured (with a signal earnestness, and even devoutness, if we look well) to do justice to all men, and to make all men rest satisfied with justice. In a word, he successfully strapped-up, by every true method and regulation, this miserable, dislocated, and dissevered mass of bleeding Anarchy into something worthy to be called an England again;—only that he died too soon, and a second ‘Conqueror’ of us, still weightier of structure, and under improved auspices, became possible, and was needed here! To appearance, Knut himself was capable of being a Charlemagne of England and the North (as has been already said or quoted), had he only lived twice as long as he did. But his whole sum of years seems not to have exceeded forty. His father Svein of the Forkbeard is reckoned to have been fifty to sixty when St. Edmund finished him at Gainsborough. We now return to Norway, ashamed of this long circuit which has been a truancy more or less.

CHAPTER IX.

KING OLAF THE THICK-SET'S VIKING DAYS.

KING HARALD GRÆNSKE, who, with another from Russia accidentally lodging beside him, got burned to death in Sweden, courting that unspeakable Sigrid the Proud,—was third cousin or so to Tryggve, father of our heroic Olaf. Accurately counted, he is great-grandson of Bjorn the Chapman, first of Haarfagr's sons whom Eric Bloodaxe made away with. His little 'kingdom,' as he called it, was a district named the Greenland (*Græneland*); he himself was one of those little Haarfagr kinglets whom Hakon Jarl, much more Olaf Tryggveson, was content to leave reigning, since they would keep the peace with him. Harald had a loving wife of his own Aasta, the name of her, soon expecting the birth of her and his pretty babe, named Olaf,—at the time he went on that deplorable Swedish adventure, the foolish, fated creature, and ended self and kingdom altogether. Aasta was greatly shocked; composed herself however; married a new husband, Sigurd Syr, a kinglet, and a great-grandson of Harald Fairhair, a man of great wealth, prudence, and influence in those countries; in whose house, as favourite and well-beloved stepson, little Olaf was wholesomely and skilfully brought up. In Sigurd's house he had, withal, a special tutor entertained for him, one Rane, known as Rane the Far-travelled, by whom he could be trained, from the earliest basis, in Norse accomplishments and arts. New children came, one or two; but Olaf, from his mother

seems always to have known that he was the distinguished and royal article there. One day his Foster-father, hurrying to leave home on business, hastily bade Olaf, no other being by, saddle his horse for him. Olaf went out with the saddle, chose the biggest he-goat about, saddled that, and brought it to the door by way of horse. Old Sigurd, a most grave man, grinned sardonically at the sight. "Hah, I see thou hast no mind to take commands from me; thou art of too high a humour to take commands." To which, says Snorro, Boy Olaf answered little except by laughing, till Sigurd saddled for himself, and rode away. His mother Aasta appears to have been a thoughtful, prudent woman, though always with a fierce royalism at the bottom of her memory, and a secret implacability on that head.

At the age of twelve Olaf went to sea; furnished with a little fleet, and skilful sea-counsellor, expert old Rane, by his Foster-father, and set out to push his fortune in the world. Rane was a steersman and counsellor in these incipient times; but the crew always called Olaf 'King,' though at first, as Snorro thinks, except it were in the hour of battle, he merely pulled an oar. He cruised and fought in this capacity on many seas and shores; passed several years, perhaps till the age of nineteen or twenty, in this wild element and way of life; fighting always in a glorious and distinguished manner. In the hour of battle, diligent enough 'to amass property,' as the Vikings termed it; and in the long days and nights of sailing, given over, it is likely, to his own thoughts and the unfathomable dialogue with the ever-moaning Sea; not the worst High School a man could have, and indeed infinitely preferable to the most that are going even now, for a high and deep young soul.

His first distinguished expedition was to Sweden: na-

tural to go thither first, to avenge his poor father's death, were it nothing more. Which he did, the Skalds say, in a distinguished manner; making victorious and handsome battle for himself, in entering Mælare Lake; and in getting out of it again, after being frozen there all winter, showing still more surprising, almost miraculous contrivance and dexterity. This was the first of his glorious victories; of which the Skalds reckon up some fourteen or thirteen very glorious indeed, mostly in the Western and Southern countries, most of all in England; till the name of Olaf Haraldson became quite famous in the Viking and strategic world. He seems really to have learned the secrets of his trade, and to have been, then and afterwards, for vigilance, contrivance, valour, and promptitude of execution, a superior fighter. Several exploits recorded of him betoken, in simple forms, what may be called a military genius.

The principal, and to us the alone interesting, of his exploits seem to have lain in England, and, what is further notable, always on the anti-Svein side. English books do not mention him at all that I can find; but it is fairly credible that, as the Norse records report, in the end of Ethelred's reign, he was the ally or hired general of Ethelred, and did a great deal of sea-fighting, watching, sailing, and sieging for this miserable king and Edmund Ironside, his son. Snorro says expressly, London, the impregnable city, had to be besieged again for Ethelred's behoof (in the interval between Svein's death and young Knut's getting back from Denmark), and that our Olaf Haraldson was the great engineer and victorious captor of London on that singular occasion,—London captured for the first time. The Bridge, as usual, Snorro says, offered almost insuperable obstacles. But the engineering genius of Olaf contrived huge

'platforms of wainscoting' (old walls of wooden houses, in fact), 'bound together by withes;' these, carried steadily aloft above the ships, will (thinks Olaf) considerably secure them and us from the destructive missiles, big boulder stones, and other mischief profusely showered down on us, till we get under the Bridge with axes and cables, and do some good upon it. Olaf's plan was tried; most of the other ships, in spite of their wainscoting and withes, recoiled on reaching the Bridge, so destructive were the boulder and other missile showers. But Olaf's ships and self got actually under the Bridge; fixed all manner of cables there; and then, with the river current in their favour, and the frightened ships rallying to help in this safer part of the enterprise, tore out the important piles and props, and fairly broke the poor Bridge, wholly or partly, down into the river, and its Danish defenders into immediate surrender. That is Snorro's account.

On a previous occasion, Olaf had been deep in a hopeful combination with Ethelred's two younger sons, Alfred and Edward, afterwards King Edward the Confessor: That they two should sally out from Normandy in strong force, unite with Olaf in ditto, and, landing on the Thames, do something effectual for themselves. But impediments, bad weather or the like, disheartened the poor Princes, and it came to nothing. Olaf was much in Normandy, what they then called Walland; a man held in honour by those Norman Dukes.

What amount of 'property' he had amassed I do not know, but could prove, were it necessary, that he had acquired some tactical or even strategic faculty and real talent for war. At Lymfjord, in Jutland, but some years after this (A.D. 1027), he had a sea-battle with the great Knut himself.

—ships combined with flood-gates, with roaring, artificial deluges; right well managed by King Olaf; which were within a hair's-breadth of destroying Knut, now become a King and Great; and did in effect send him instantly running. But of this more particularly by and by.

What still more surprises me is the mystery, where Olaf, in this wandering, fighting, sea-roving life, acquired his deeply religious feeling, his intense adherence to the Christian Faith. I suppose it had been in England, where many pious persons, priestly and other, were still to be met with, that Olaf had gathered these doctrines; and that in those his unfathomable dialogues with the ever-moaning Ocean, they had struck root downwards in the soul of him, and borne fruit upwards to the degree so conspicuous afterwards. It is certain he became a deeply pious man during these long Viking cruises; and directed all his strength, when strength and authority were lent him, to establishing the Christian religion in his country, and suppressing and abolishing Vikingism there; both of which objects, and their respective worth and unworth, he must himself have long known so well.

It was well on in A.D. 1016 that Knut gained his last victory, at Ashdon, in Essex, where the earth pyramids and antique church near by still testify the thankful piety of Knut,—or, at lowest, his joy at having *won* instead of lost and perished, as he was near doing there. And it was still this same year when the noble Edmund Ironside, after forced partition-treaty 'in the Isle of Alney,' got scandalously murdered, and Knut became indisputable sole King of England, and decisively settled himself to his work of governing there. In the year before either of which events, while all still hung uncertain for Knut, and even Eric Jarl of Norway had to be summoned in aid of him,—in that year 1015, as

one might naturally guess, and as all Icelandic hints and indications lead us to date the thing, Olaf had decided to give up Vikingism in all its forms; to return to Norway, and try whether he could not assert the place and career that belonged to him there. Jarl Eric had vanished with all his war forces towards England, leaving only a boy, Hakon, as successor, and Svein, his own brother,—a quiet man, who had always avoided war. Olaf landed in Norway without obstacle; but decided to be quiet till he had himself examined and consulted friends.

His reception by his mother Aasta was of the kindest and proudest, and is lovingly described by Snorro. A pretty idyllic or epic piece, of *Norse* Homeric type: How Aasta, hearing of her son's advent, set all her maids and menials to work at the top of their speed; despatched a runner to the harvest-field, where her husband Sigurd was, to warn him to come home and dress. How Sigurd was standing among his harvest folk, reapers and binders; and what he had on,—broad slouch hat, with veil (against the midges), blue kirtle, hose of I forget what colour, with laced boots; and in his hand a stick with silver head and ditto ring upon it;—a personable old gentleman, of the eleventh century, in those parts. Sigurd was cautious, prudentially cunctatory, though heartily friendly in his counsel to Olaf, as to the King question. Aasta had a Spartan tone in her wild maternal heart; and assures Olaf that she, with a half-reproachful glance at Sigurd, will stand by him to the death in this his just and noble enterprise. Sigurd promises to consult farther in his neighbourhood, and to correspond by messages; the result is, Olaf, resolutely pushing forward himself, resolves to call a Thing, and openly claim his kingship there. The Thing itself was willing enough: opposition parties do here and there bestir them-

selves; but Olaf is always swifter than they. Five kinglets somewhere in the Uplands,¹—all descendants of Haarfagr; but averse to break the peace, which Jarl Eric and Hakon Jarl both have always willingly allowed to peaceable people,—seem to be the main opposition party. These five take the field against Olaf with what force they have; Olaf, one night, by beautiful celerity and strategic practice which a Friedrich or a Turenne might have approved, surrounds these Five; and when morning breaks, there is nothing for them but either death or else instant surrender, and swearing of fealty to King Olaf. Which latter branch of the alternative they gladly accept, the whole five of them, and go home again.

This was a beautiful bit of war-practice by King Olaf on land. By another stroke still more compendious at sea, he had already settled poor young Hakon, and made him peaceable for a long while. Olaf, by diligent quest and spy-messaging, had ascertained that Hakon, just returning from Denmark and farewell to Papa and Knut, both now under way for England, was coasting north towards Trondhjem; and intended on or about such a day to land in such and such a fjord towards the end of this Trondhjem voyage. Olaf at once mans two big ships, steers through the narrow mouth of the said fjord, moors one ship on the north shore, another on the south; fixes a strong cable, well sunk under water, to the capstans of these two; and in all quietness waits for Hakon. Before many hours, Hakon's royal or quasi-royal barge steers gaily into this fjord; is a little surprised, perhaps, to see within the jaws of it two big ships at anchor; but steers gallantly along, nothing doubting. Olaf, with a signal of 'All hands,' works his two capstans; has

¹ Snorro, Laing's Translation, ii. p. 31 et seq., will minutely specify.

the cable up high enough at the right moment, catches with it the keel of poor Hakon's barge, upsets it, empties it wholly into the sea. Wholly into the sea; saves Hakon, however, and his people from drowning, and brings them on board. His dialogue with poor young Hakon, especially poor young Hakon's responses, is very pretty. Shall I give it, out of Snorro, and let the reader take it for as authentic as he can? It is at least the true image of it in authentic Snorro's *head*, little more than two centuries later.

'Jarl Hakon was led up to the king's ship. He was the 'handsomest man that could be seen. He had long hair as 'fine as silk, bound about his head with a gold ornament. 'When he sat down in the forehold the king said to him:'

King. "It is not false, what is said of your family, that ye 'are handsome people to look at; but now your luck has 'deserted you."

Hakon. "It has always been the case that success is 'changeable; and there is no luck in the matter. It has 'gone with your family as with mine to have by turns the 'better lot. I am little beyond childhood in years; and at 'any rate we could not have defended ourselves, as we did 'not expect any attack on the way. It may turn out better 'with us another time."

King. "Dost thou not apprehend that thou art in such a 'condition that, hereafter, there can be neither victory nor 'defeat for thee?"

Hakon. "That is what only thou canst determine, King, 'according to thy pleasure."

King. "What wilt thou give me, Jarl, if, for this time, I 'let thee go, whole and unhurt?"

Hakon. "What wilt thou take, King?"

King. "Nothing, except that thou shalt leave the country ;

‘give up thy kingdom; and take an oath that thou wilt never go into battle against me.’²

Jarl Hakon accepted the generous terms; went to England and King Knut, and kept his bargain for a good few years; though he was at last driven, by pressure of King Knut, to violate it,—little to his profit, as we shall see. One victorious naval battle with Jarl Svein, Hakon’s uncle, and his adherents, who fled to Sweden, after his beating,—battle not difficult to a skilful, hard-hitting king,—was pretty much all the actual fighting Olaf had to do in this enterprise. He various times met angry Bonders and refractory Things with arms in their hand; but by skilful, firm management,—perfectly patient, but also perfectly ready to be active,—he mostly managed without coming to strokes; and was universally recognised by Norway as its real king. A promising young man, and fit to be a king, thinks Snorro. Only of middle stature, almost rather shortish; but firm-standing, and stout-built; so that they got to call him Olaf the Thick (meaning Olaf the Thick-set, or Stout-built), though his final epithet among them was infinitely higher. For the rest, ‘a comely, earnest, prepossessing look; beautiful yellow hair in quantity; broad, honest face, of a complexion pure as snow and rose;’ and finally (or firstly) ‘the brightest eyes in the world; such that, in his anger, no man could stand them.’ He had a heavy task ahead, and needed all his qualities and fine gifts to get it done.

² Snorro, ii. pp. 24-5.

CHAPTER X.

REIGN OF KING OLAF THE SAINT.

THE late two Jarls, now gone about their business, had both been baptised, and called themselves Christians. But during their government they did nothing in the conversion way; left every man to choose his own God or Gods; so that some had actually two, the Christian God by land, and at sea Thor, whom they considered safer in that element. And in effect the mass of the people had fallen back into a sluggish heathenism or half-heathenism, the life-labour of Olaf Tryggveson lying ruinous or almost quite overset. The new Olaf, son of Harald, set himself with all his strength to mend such a state of matters; and stood by his enterprise to the end, as the one highest interest, including all others, for his People and him. His method was by no means soft; on the contrary, it was hard, rapid, severe,—somewhat on the model of Tryggveson's, though with more of *bishoping* and preaching superadded. Yet still there was a great deal of mauling, vigorous punishing, and an entire intolerance of these two things: Heathenism and Sea-robbery, at least of Sea-robbery in the old style; whether in the style we moderns still practise, and call privateering, I do not quite know. But Vikingism proper had to cease in Norway; still more, Heathenism, under penalties too severe to be borne; death, mutilation of limb, not to mention forfeiture and less rigorous coercion. Olaf was inexorable against violation of the law. "Too severe," cried many; to whom one answers, "Perhaps

in part *yes*, perhaps also in great part *no*; depends altogether on the previous question, How far the law was the eternal one of God Almighty in the universe, How far the law merely of Olaf (destitute of right inspiration) left to his own passions and whims?"

Many were the jangles Olaf had with the refractory Heathen Things and Ironbeards of a new generation: very curious to see. Scarcely ever did it come to fighting, between King and Thing, though often enough near it; but the Thing discerning, as it usually did in time, that the King was stronger in men, seemed to say unanimously to itself, "We have lost, then; baptise us, we must burn our old gods and conform." One new feature we do slightly discern: here and there a touch of theological argument on the heathen side. At one wild Thing, far up in the Dovrefjeld, of a very heathen temper, there was much of that; not to be quenched by King Olaf at the moment; so that it had to be adjourned till the morrow, and again till the next day. Here are some traits of it, much abridged from Snorro (who gives a highly punctual account), which vividly represent Olaf's posture and manner of proceeding in such intricacies.

The chief Ironbeard on this occasion was one Gudbrand, a very rugged peasant; who, says Snorro, was like a king in that district. Some days before, King Olaf, intending a religious Thing in those deeply heathen parts, with alternative of Christianity or conflagration, is reported, on looking down into the valley and the beautiful village of Loar standing there, to have said wistfully, "What a pity it is that so beautiful a village should be burnt!" Olaf sent out his message-token all the same, however, and met Gudbrand and an immense assemblage, whose humour towards him was uncompliant to a high degree indeed. Judge by this pre-

liminary speech of Gudbrand to his Thing-people, while Olaf was not yet arrived, but only advancing, hardly got to Breeden on the other side of the hill: "A man has come to Loar who is called Olaf," said Gudbrand, "and will force upon us another faith than we had before, and will break in pieces all our Gods. He says he has a much greater and more powerful God; and it is wonderful that the earth does not burst asunder under him, or that our God lets him go about unpunished when he dares to talk such things. I know this for certain, that if we carry Thor, who has always stood by us, out of our Temple that is standing upon this farm, Olaf's God will melt away, and he and his men be made nothing as soon as Thor looks upon them." Whereupon the Bonders all shouted as one man, "Yea!"

Which tremendous message they even forwarded to Olaf, by Gudbrand's younger son at the head of 700 armed men; but did not terrify Olaf with it, who, on the contrary, drew up his troops, rode himself at the head of them, and began a speech to the Bonders, in which he invited them to adopt Christianity, as the one true faith for mortals.

Far from consenting to this, the Bonders raised a general shout, smiting at the same time their shields with their weapons; but Olaf's men advancing on them swiftly, and flinging spears, they turned and ran, leaving Gudbrand's son behind, a prisoner, to whom Olaf gave his life: "Go home now to thy father, and tell him I mean to be with him soon."

The son goes accordingly, and advises his father not to face Olaf; but Gudbrand angrily replies: "Ha, coward! I see thou, too, art taken by the folly that man is going about with;" and is resolved to fight. That night, however, Gudbrand has a most remarkable Dream, or Vision: A Man surrounded by light, bringing great terror with him, who warns

Gudbrand against doing battle with Olaf. "If thou dost, thou and all thy people will fall; wolves will drag away thee and thine, ravens will tear thee in stripes!" And lo, in telling this to Thord Potbelly, a sturdy neighbour of his and henchman in the Thing, it is found that to Thord also has come the self-same terrible Apparition! Better propose truce to Olaf (who seems to have these dreadful Ghostly Powers on his side), and the holding of a Thing, to discuss matters between us. Thing assembles, on a day of heavy rain. Being all seated, uprises King Olaf, and informs them: "The people of Lessø, Loar, and Vaage, have accepted Christianity, and broken down their idol-houses: they believe now in the True God, who has made heaven and earth, and knows all things;" and sits down again without more words.

Gudbrand replies, "We know nothing about him of whom thou speakest. Dost thou call him God, whom neither thou nor anyone else can see? But we have a God who can be seen every day, although he is not out today because the weather is wet; and he will appear to thee terrible and very grand; and I expect that fear will mix with thy very blood when he comes into the Thing. But since thou sayest thy God is so great, let him make it so that tomorrow we have a cloudy day, but without rain, and then let us meet again."

The king accordingly returned home to his lodging, taking Gudbrand's son as a hostage; but he gave them a man as hostage in exchange. In the evening the king asked Gudbrand's son What their God was like? He replied that he bore the likeness of Thor; had a hammer in his hand; was of great size, but hollow within; and had a high stand, upon which he stood when he was out. "Neither gold nor silver are wanting about him, and every day he

‘receives four cakes of bread, besides meat.’ They then
‘went to bed; but the king watched all night in prayer.
‘When day dawned the king went to mass; then to table,
‘and from thence to the Thing. The weather was such as
‘Gudbrand desired. Now the Bishop stood up in his choir-
‘robes, with bishop’s coif on his head, and bishop’s crosier in
‘his hand. He spoke to the Bonders of the true faith, told
‘the many wonderful acts of God, and concluded his speech
‘well.

‘Thord Potbelly replies, “Many things we are told of by
‘this learned man with the staff in his hand, crooked at the
‘top like a ram’s horn. But since you say, comrades, that
‘your God is so powerful, and can do so many wonders, tell
‘him to make it clear sunshine tomorrow forenoon, and then
‘we shall meet here again, and do one of two things,—either
‘agree with you about this business, or fight you.” And
‘they separated for the day.’

Over night the king instructed Kolbein the Strong, an
immense fellow, the same who killed Gunhild’s two brothers,
that he, Kolbein, must stand next him tomorrow; people
must go down to where the ships of the Bonders lay, and
punctually bore holes in every one of them; *item*, to the
farms where their horses were, and punctually unhalter the
whole of them, and let them loose: all which was done.
Snorro continues:

‘Now the king was in prayer all night, beseeching God of
‘his goodness and mercy to release him from evil. When
‘mass was ended, and morning was gray, the king went to
‘the Thing. When he came thither, some Bonders had
‘already arrived, and they saw a great crowd coming along,
‘and bearing among them a huge man’s image, glancing with
‘gold and silver. When the Bonders who were at the Thing

‘ saw it, they started up, and bowed themselves down before
‘ the ugly idol. Thereupon it was set down upon the Thing
‘ field; and on the one side of it sat the Bonders, and on the
‘ other the King and his people.

‘ Then Dale Gudbrand stood up and said, “ Where now,
‘ king, is thy God? I think he will now carry his head lower;
‘ and neither thou, nor the man with the horn, sitting beside
‘ thee there, whom thou callest Bishop, are so bold today as
‘ on the former days. For now our God, who rules over all,
‘ is come, and looks on you with an angry eye; and now I
‘ see well enough that you are terrified, and scarcely dare
‘ raise your eyes. Throw away now all your opposition,
‘ and believe in the God who has your fate wholly in his
‘ hands.”

‘ The king now whispers to Kolbein the Strong, without
‘ the Bonders perceiving it, “ If it come so in the course of
‘ my speech that the Bonders look another way than towards
‘ their idol, strike him as hard as thou canst with thy
‘ club.”

‘ The king then stood up and spoke: “ Much hast thou
‘ talked to us this morning, and greatly hast thou wondered
‘ that thou canst not see our God; but we expect that he
‘ will soon come to us. Thou wouldst frighten us with thy
‘ God, who is both blind and deaf, and cannot even move
‘ about without being carried; but now I expect it will be
‘ but a short time before he meets his fate: for turn your
‘ eyes towards the east,—behold our God advancing in great
‘ light.”

‘ The sun was rising, and all turned to look. At that
‘ moment Kolbein gave their God a stroke, so that he quite
‘ burst asunder; and there ran out of him mice as big almost
‘ as cats, and reptiles and adders. The Bonders were so

‘terrified that some fled to their ships; but when they sprang out upon them the ships filled with water, and could not get away. Others ran to their horses, but could not find them. The king then ordered the Bonders to be called together, saying he wanted to speak with them; on which the Bonders came back, and the Thing was again seated.

‘The king rose up and said, “I do not understand what your noise and running mean. You yourselves see what your God can do,—the idol you adorned with gold and silver, and brought meat and provisions to. You see now that the protecting powers, who used and got good of all that, were the mice and adders, the reptiles and lizards; and surely they do ill who trust to such, and will not abandon this folly. Take now your gold and ornaments that are lying strewed on the grass, and give them to your wives and daughters, but never hang them hereafter upon stocks and stones. Here are two conditions between us to choose upon: either accept Christianity, or fight this very day, and the victory be to them to whom the God we worship gives it.”

‘Then Dale Gudbrand stood up and said, “We have sustained great damage upon our God; but since he will not help us, we will believe in the God whom thou believest in.”

‘Then all received Christianity. The Bishop baptised Gudbrand and his son. King Olaf and Bishop Sigurd left behind them teachers; and they who met as enemies parted as friends. And afterwards Gudbrand built a church in the valley.’¹

Olaf was by no means an unmerciful man,—much the reverse where he saw good cause. There was a wicked old

¹ Snorro, ii. pp. 156-161.

King Rærik, for example, one of those five kinglets whom, with their bits of armaments, Olaf by stratagem had surrounded one night, and at once bagged and subjected when morning rose, all of them consenting; all of them except this Rærik, whom Olaf, as the readiest sure course, took home with him; blinded, and kept in his own house; finding there was no alternative but that or death to the obstinate old dog, who was a kind of distant cousin withal, and could not conscientiously be killed. Stone-blind old Rærik was not always in murderous humour. Indeed, for most part he wore a placid, conciliatory aspect, and said shrewd amusing things; but had thrice over tried, with amazing cunning of contrivance, though stone-blind, to thrust a dagger into Olaf, and the last time had all but succeeded. So that, as Olaf still refused to have him killed, it had become a problem what was to be done with him. Olaf's good humour, as well as his quiet, ready sense and practicality, are manifested in his final settlement of this Rærik problem. Olaf's laugh, I can perceive, was not so loud as Tryggveson's, but equally hearty, coming from the bright mind of him!

Besides blind Rærik, Olaf had in his household one Thorarin, an Icelandier; a remarkably ugly man, says Snorro, but a far-travelled, shrewdly observant, loyal-minded, and good-humoured person, whom Olaf liked to talk with. 'Remarkably ugly,' says Snorro, 'especially in his hands and feet, which were large and ill-shaped to a degree.' One morning Thorarin, who, with other trusted ones, slept in Olaf's apartment, was lazily dozing and yawning, and had stretched one of his feet out of the bed before the king awoke. The foot was still there when Olaf did open his bright eyes, which instantly lighted on this foot.

"Well, here is a foot," says Olaf, gaily, "which one sel-

dom sees the match of; I durst venture there is not another so ugly in this city of Nidaros."

"Hah, king!" said Thorarin, "there are few things one cannot match if one seek long and take pains. I would bet, with thy permission, King, to find an uglier."

"Done!" cried Olaf. Upon which Thorarin stretched out the other foot.

"A still uglier," cried he; "for it has lost the little toe."

"Ho, ho!" said Olaf; "but it is I who have gained the bet. The *less* of an ugly thing the less ugly, not the more!"

Loyal Thorarin respectfully submitted.

"What is to be my penalty, then? The king it is that must decide."

"To take me that wicked old Rærik to Leif Ericson in Greenland."

Which the Iclander did; leaving two vacant seats henceforth at Olaf's table. Leif Ericson, son of Eric discoverer of America, quietly managed Rærik henceforth; sent him to Iceland,—I think to father Eric himself; certainly to some safe hand there, in whose house, or in some still quieter neighbouring lodging, at his own choice, old Rærik spent the last three years of his life in a perfectly quiescent manner.

Olaf's struggles in the matter of religion had actually settled that question in Norway. By these rough methods of his, whatever we may think of them, Heathenism had got itself smashed dead; and was no more heard of in that country. Olaf himself was evidently a highly devout and pious man;—whosoever is born with Olaf's temper now will still find, as Olaf did, new and infinite field for it! Christianity in Norway had the like fertility as in other countries; or even rose to a higher, and what Dahlmann thinks, exu-

berant pitch, in the course of the two centuries which followed that of Olaf. Him all testimony represents to us as a most righteous no less than most religious king. Continually vigilant, just, and rigorous was Olaf's administration of the laws; repression of robbery, punishment of injustice, stern repayment of evil-doers, wherever he could lay hold of them.

Among the Bonder or opulent class, and indeed everywhere, for the poor too can be sinners and need punishment, Olaf had, by this course of conduct, naturally made enemies. His severity so visible to all, and the justice and infinite beneficence of it so invisible except to a very few. But, at any rate, his reign for the first ten years was victorious; and might have been so to the end, had it not been intersected, and interfered with, by King Knut in *his* far bigger orbit and current of affairs and interests. Knut's English affairs and Danish being all settled to his mind, he seems, especially after that year of pilgrimage to Rome, and association with the Pontiffs and Kaisers of the world on that occasion, to have turned his more particular attention upon Norway, and the claims he himself had there. Jarl Hakon, too, sister's son of Knut, and always well seen by him, had long been busy in this direction, much forgetful of that oath to Olaf when his barge got canted over by the cable of two capstans, and his life was given him, not without conditions altogether!

About the year 1026 there arrived two splendid persons out of England, bearing King Knut the Great's letter and seal, with a message, likely enough to be far from welcome to Olaf. For some days Olaf refused to see them or their letter, shrewdly guessing what the purport would be. Which indeed was couched in mild language, but of sharp meaning

enough: a notice to King Olaf, namely, That Norway was properly, by just heritage, Knut the Great's; and that Olaf must become the great Knut's liegeman, and pay tribute to him, or worse would follow. King Olaf, listening to these two splendid persons and their letter, in indignant silence till they quite ended, made answer: "I have heard say, by old accounts there are, that King Gorm of Denmark" (Blue-tooth's father, Knut's great-grandfather) "was considered but a small king; having Denmark only and few people to rule over. But the kings who succeeded him thought that insufficient for them; and it has since come so far that King Knut rules over both Denmark and England, and has conquered for himself a part of Scotland. And now he claims also my paternal bit of heritage; cannot be contented without that too. Does he wish to rule over all the countries of the North? Can he eat up all the kale in England itself, this Knut the Great? He shall do that, and reduce his England to a desert, before I lay my head in his hands, or show him any other kind of vassalage. And so I bid you tell him these my words: I will defend Norway with battle-axe and sword as long as life is given me, and will pay tax to no man for my kingdom." Words which naturally irritated Knut to a high degree.

Next year accordingly (year 1027), tenth or eleventh year of Olaf's reign, there came bad rumours out of England: That Knut was equipping an immense army,—land-army, and such a fleet as had never sailed before; Knut's own ship in it,—a Gold Dragon with no fewer than sixty benches of oars. Olaf and Onund King of Sweden, whose sister he had married, well guessed whither this armament was bound. They were friends withal, they recognised their common peril in this imminence; and had, in repeated consultations,

taken measures the best that their united skill (which I find was mainly Olaf's, but loyally accepted by the other) could suggest. It was in this year that Olaf (with his Swedish king assisting) did his grand feat upon Knut in Lymfjord of Jutland, which was already spoken of. The special circumstances of which were these :

Knut's big armament arriving on the Jutish coasts too late in the season, and the coast country lying all plundered into temporary wreck by the two Norse kings, who shrank away on sight of Knut, there was nothing could be done upon them by Knut this year,—or, if anything, what? Knut's ships ran into Lymfjord, the safe-sheltered frith, or intricate long straggle of friths and straits, which almost cuts Jutland in two in that region; and lay safe, idly rocking on the waters there, uncertain what to do farther. At last he steered in his big ship and some others, deeper into the interior of Lymfjord, deeper and deeper onwards to the mouth of a big river called the Helge (*Helge-aa*, the Holy River, not discoverable in my poor maps, but certainly enough still existing and still flowing somewhere among those intricate straits and friths), towards the bottom of which Helge river lay, in some safe nook, the small combined Swedish and Norse fleet, under the charge of Onund, the Swedish king, while at the top or source, which is a biggish mountain lake, King Olaf had been doing considerable engineering works, well suited to such an occasion, and was now ready at a moment's notice. Knut's fleet having idly taken station here, notice from the Swedish king was instantly sent; instantly Olaf's well-engineered flood-gates were thrown open; from the swollen lake a huge deluge of water was let loose; Olaf himself with all his people hastening down to join his Swedish friend, and get on board

in time ; Helge river all the while alongside of him, with ever-increasing roar, and wider-spreading deluge, hastening down the steeps in the night-watches. So that, along with Olaf, or some way ahead of him, came immeasurable roaring waste of waters upon Knut's negligent fleet ; shattered, broke, and stranded many of his ships, and was within a trifle of destroying the Golden Dragon herself, with Knut on board. Olaf and Onund, we need not say, were promptly there in person, doing their very best ; the railings of the Golden Dragon, however, were too high for their little ships ; and Jarl Ulf, husband of Knut's sister, at the top of his speed, courageously intervening, spoiled their stratagem, and saved Knut from this very dangerous pass.

Knut did nothing more this winter. The two Norse kings, quite unequal to attack such an armament, except by ambush and engineering, sailed away ; again plundering at discretion on the Danish coast ; carrying into Sweden great booties and many prisoners ; but obliged to lie fixed all winter ; and indeed to leave their fleets there for a series of winters,—Knut's fleet, posted at Elsinore on both sides of the Sound, rendering all egress from the Baltic impossible, except at his pleasure. Ulf's opportune deliverance of his royal brother-in-law did not much bestead poor Ulf himself. He had been in disfavour before, pardoned with difficulty, by Queen Emma's intercession ; an ambitious, officious, pushing, stirring, and, both in England and Denmark, almost dangerous man ; and this conspicuous accidental merit only awoke new jealousy in Knut. Knut, finding nothing pass the Sound worth much blockading, went ashore ; 'and the day before Michaelmas,' says Snorro, 'rode with a great retinue to Roeskilde.' Snorro continues his tragic narrative of what befell there :

‘There Knut’s brother-in-law, Jarl Ulf, had prepared a great feast for him. The Jarl was the most agreeable of hosts; but the King was silent and sullen. The Jarl talked to him in every way to make him cheerful, and brought forward everything he could think of to amuse him; but the King remained stern, and speaking little. At last the Jarl proposed a game of chess, which he agreed to. A chess-board was produced, and they played together. Jarl Ulf was hasty in temper, stiff, and in nothing yielding; but everything he managed went on well in his hands: and he was a great warrior, about whom there are many stories. He was the most powerful man in Denmark next to the King. Jarl Ulf’s sister, Gyda, was married to Jarl Gudin (Godwin) Ulfmadson; and their sons were, Harald King of England, and Jarl Tosti, Jarl Walthiof, Jarl Mauro-Kaare, and Jarl Svein. Gyda was the name of their daughter, who was married to the English King Edward, the Good (whom we call the Confessor).

‘When they had played a while, the King made a false move; on which the Jarl took a knight from him; but the King set the piece on the board again, and told the Jarl to make another move. But the Jarl flew angry, tumbled the chess-board over, rose, and went away. The King said, “Run thy ways, Ulf the Fearful.” The Jarl turned round at the door and said, “Thou wouldst have run farther at Helge river hadst thou been left to battle there. Thou didst not call me Ulf the Fearful when I hastened to thy help while the Swedes were beating thee like a dog.” The Jarl then went out, and went to bed.

‘The following morning, while the King was putting on his clothes, he said to his footboy, “Go. thou to Jarl Ulf and kill him.” The lad went, was away a while, and then

'came back. The King said, "Hast thou killed the Jarl?"
' "I did not kill him, for he was gone to St. Lucius's church."
' There was a man called Ivar the White, a Norwegian by
' birth, who was the King's courtman and chamberlain. The
' King said to him, "Go thou and kill the Jarl." Ivar went
' to the church, and in at the choir, and thrust his sword
' through the Jarl, who died on the spot. Then Ivar went
' to the King, with the bloody sword in his hand.

' The King said, "Hast thou killed the Jarl?" "I have
' killed him," said he. "Thou hast done well," answered
' the King."²

From a man who built so many churches (one on each battle-field where he had fought, to say nothing of the others), and who had in him such depths of real devotion and other fine cosmic quality, this does seem rather strong! But it is characteristic, withal,—of the man, and perhaps of the times still more. In any case, it is an event worth noting, the slain Jarl Ulf and his connections being of importance in the history of Denmark and of England also. Ulf's wife was Astrid, sister of Knut, and their only child was Svein, styled afterwards 'Svein Estrithson' (*Astrid-son*) when he became noted in the world,—at this time a beardless youth, who, on the back of this tragedy, fled hastily to Sweden, where were friends of Ulf. After some ten years' eclipse there, Knut and both his sons being now dead, Svein reappeared in Denmark under a new and eminent figure, 'Jarl of Denmark,' highest Liegeman to the then sovereign there. Broke his oath to said sovereign, declared himself, Svein Estrithson, to be real King of Denmark; and, after much preliminary trouble, and many beatings and disastrous flights to and fro, became in effect such,

² Snorro, ii. pp. 252-3.

—to the wonder of mankind ; for he had not had one victory to cheer him on, or any good luck or merit that one sees, except that of surviving longer than some others. Nevertheless he came to be the Restorer, so-called, of Danish independence ; sole remaining representative of Knut (or Knut's sister), of Fork-beard, Blue-tooth, and Old Gorm ; and ancestor of all the subsequent kings of Denmark for some 400 years ; himself coming, as we see, only by the Distaff side, all of the Sword or male side having died so soon. Early death, it has been observed, was the Great Knut's allotment, and all his posterity's as well ;—fatal limit (had there been no others, which we see there were) to his becoming 'Charlemagne of the North' in any considerable degree ! Jarl Ulf, as we have seen, had a sister, Gyda by name, wife to Earl Godwin ('Gudin Ulfnadsson,' as Snorro calls him), a very memorable Englishman, whose son and hers, King Harald, *Harold* in English books, is the memorablest of all. These things ought to be better known to English antiquaries, and will perhaps be alluded to again.

This pretty little victory or affront, gained over Knut in *Lymfjord*, was among the last successes of Olaf against that mighty man. Olaf, the skilful captain he was, need not have despaired to defend his Norway against Knut and all the world. But he learned henceforth, month by month ever more tragically, that his own people, seeing softer prospects under Knut, and in particular the chiefs of them, industriously bribed by Knut for years past, had fallen away from him ; and that his means of defence were gone. Next summer, Knut's grand fleet sailed, unopposed, along the coast of Norway ; Knut summoning a Thing every here and there, and in all of them meeting nothing but sky-high acclamation and acceptance. Olaf, with some twelve little ships, all he

now had, lay quiet in some safe fjord, near Lindenæs, what we now call the Naze, behind some little solitary isles on the southeast of Norway there; till triumphant Knut had streamed home again. Home to England again: 'Sovereign of Norway' now, with nephew Hakon appointed Jarl and Vice-regent under him! This was the news Olaf met on venturing out; and that his worst anticipations were not beyond the sad truth. All, or almost all, the chief Bonders and men of weight in Norway had declared against him, and stood with triumphant Knut.

Olaf, with his twelve poor ships, steered vigorously along the coast to collect money and force,—if such could now anywhere be had. He himself was resolute to hold out, and try. 'Sailing swiftly with a fair wind, morning cloudy with some showers,' he passed the coast of Jedderen, which was Erling Skjalgson's country, when he got sure notice of an endless multitude of ships, war-ships, armed merchant ships, all kinds of shipping-craft, down to fishermen's boats, just getting under way against him, under the command of Erling Skjalgson,—the powerfulest of his subjects, once much a friend of Olaf's, but now gone against him to this length, thanks to Olaf's severity of justice, and Knut's abundance in gold and promises for years back. To that complexion had it come with Erling; sailing with this immense assemblage of the naval people and populace of Norway to seize King Olaf, and bring him to the great Knut dead or alive.

Erling had a grand new ship of his own, which far out-sailed the general miscellany of rebel ships, and was visibly fast gaining distance on Olaf himself,—who well understood what Erling's puzzle was, between the tail of his game (the miscellany of rebel ships, namely) that could not come up,

and the head or general prize of the game which was crowding all sail to get away; and Olaf took advantage of the same. "Lower your sails!" said Olaf to his men (though we must go slower). "Ho you, we have lost sight of them!" said Erling to his, and put on all his speed; Olaf going, soon after this, altogether invisible,—behind a little island that he knew of, whence into a certain fiord or bay (Bay of Fungen on the maps), which he thought would suit him. "Halt here, and get out your arms," said Olaf, and had not to wait long till Erling came bounding in, past the rocky promontory, and with astonishment beheld Olaf's fleet of twelve with their battle-axes and their grappling-irons all in perfect readiness. These fell on him, the unready Erling, simultaneous, like a cluster of angry bees; and in a few minutes cleared his ship of men altogether, except Erling himself. Nobody asked his life, nor probably would have got it if he had. Only Erling still stood erect on a high place on the poop, fiercely defensive, and very difficult to get at. 'Could not be reached at all,' says Snorro, 'except by spears or arrows, and these he warded off with untiring dexterity; no man in Norway, it was said, had ever defensed himself so long alone against many,'—an almost invincible Erling, had his cause been good. Olaf himself noticed Erling's behaviour, and said to him, from the fore-deck below, "Thou hast turned against me today, Erling." "The eagles fight breast to breast," answers he. This was a speech of the king's to Erling once long ago, while they stood fighting, not as now, but side by side. The king, with some transient thought of possibility going through his head, rejoins, "Wilt thou surrender, Erling?" "That will I," answered he; took the helmet off his head; laid down sword and shield; and went forward to the fore-castle deck.

The king pricked, I think not very harshly, into Erling's chin or beard with the point of his battle-axe, saying, "I must mark thee as traitor to thy Sovereign, though." Whereupon one of the bystanders, Aslak Fitiaskalle, stupidly and fiercely burst up; smote Erling on the head with his axe; so that it struck fast in his brain and was instantly the death of Erling. "Ill-luck attend thee for that stroke; thou hast struck Norway out of my hand by it!" cried the king to Aslak; but forgave the poor fellow, who had done it meaning well. The insurrectionary Bonder fleet arriving soon after, as if for certain victory, was struck with astonishment at this Erling catastrophe; and being now without any leader of authority, made not the least attempt at battle; but, full of discouragement and consternation, thankfully allowed Olaf to sail away on his northward voyage, at discretion; and themselves went off lamenting, with Erling's dead body.

This small victory was the last that Olaf had over his many enemies at present. He sailed along, still northward, day after day; several important people joined him; but the news from landward grew daily more ominous: Bonders busily arming to rear of him; and ahead, Hakon still more busily at Trondhjem, now near by, "—and he will end thy days, King, if he have strength enough!" Olaf paused; sent scouts to a hill-top: "Hakon's armament visible enough, and under way hitherward, about the Isle of Bjarnö, yonder!" Soon after, Olaf himself saw the Bonder armament of twenty-five ships, from the southward, sail past in the distance to join that of Hakon; and, worse still, his own ships, one and another (seven in all), were slipping off on a like errand! He made for the Fiord of Fodrar, mouth of the rugged strath called Valdal,—which I think still knows Olaf,

and has now an 'Olaf's Highway,' where, nine centuries ago, it scarcely had a path. Olaf entered this fiord, had his land-tent set up, and a cross beside it, on the small level green behind the promontory there. Finding that his twelve poor ships were now reduced to five, against a world all risen upon him, he could not but see and admit to himself that there was no chance left; and that he must withdraw across the mountains and wait for a better time.

His journey through that wild country, in these forlorn and straitened circumstances, has a mournful dignity and homely pathos, as described by Snorro: how he drew up his five poor ships upon the beach, packed all their furniture away, and with his hundred or so of attendants and their journey-baggage, under guidance of some friendly Bonder, rode up into the desert and foot of the mountains; scaled, after three days' effort (as if by miracle, thought his attendants and thought Snorro), the well-nigh precipitous slope that led across,—never without miraculous aid from Heaven and Olaf, could baggage-wagons have ascended that path! In short, How he fared along, beset by difficulties and the mournfulest thoughts; but patiently persisted, steadfastly trusted in God; and was fixed to return, and by God's help try again. An evidently very pious and devout man; a good man struggling with adversity, such as the gods, we may still imagine with the ancients, do look down upon as their noblest sight.

He got to Sweden, to the court of his brother-in-law; kindly and nobly enough received there, though gradually, perhaps, ill-seen by the now authorities of Norway. So that, before long, he quitted Sweden; left his queen there with her only daughter, his and hers, the only child they had; he himself had an only son, 'by a bondwoman,' Magnus by

name, who came to great things afterwards; of whom, and of which, by and by. With this bright little boy, and a selected escort of attendants, he moved away to Russia, to King Jarroslav; where he might wait secure against all risk of hurting kind friends by his presence. He seems to have been an exile altogether some two years,—such is one's vague notion; for there is no chronology in Snorro or his Sagas, and one is reduced to guessing and inferring. He had reigned over Norway, reckoning from the first days of his landing there to those last of his leaving it across the Dovrefjeld, about fifteen years, ten of them shiningly victorious.

The news from Norway were naturally agitating to King Olaf; and, in the fluctuation of events there, his purposes and prospects varied much. He sometimes thought of pilgriming to Jerusalem, and a henceforth exclusively religious life; but for most part his pious thoughts themselves gravitated towards Norway, and a stroke for his old place and task there, which he steadily considered to have been committed to him by God. Norway, by the rumours, was evidently not at rest. Jarl Hakon, under the high patronage of his uncle, had lasted there but a little while. I know not that his government was especially unpopular, nor whether he himself much remembered his broken oath. It appears, however, he had left in England a beautiful bride; and considering farther that in England only could bridal ornaments and other wedding outfit of a sufficiently royal kind be found, he set sail thither, to fetch her and them himself. One evening of wildish-looking weather he was seen about the north-east corner of the Pentland Frith; the night rose to be tempestuous; Hakon or any timber of his fleet was never seen more. Had all gone down,—broken oaths, bridal

hopes, and all else; mouse and man,—into the roaring waters. There was no farther Opposition-line; the like of which had lasted ever since old heathen Hakon Jarl, down to this his grandson Hakon's *finis* in the Pentland Frith. With this Hakon's disappearance it now disappeared.

Indeed Knut himself, though of an empire suddenly so great, was but a temporary phenomenon. Fate had decided that the grand and wise Knut was to be short-lived; and to leave nothing as successors but an ineffectual young Harald Harefoot, who soon perished, and a still stupider fiercely-drinking Harda-Knut, who rushed down of apoplexy (here in London City, as I guess), with the goblet at his mouth, drinking health and happiness at a wedding-feast, also before long.

Hakon having vanished in this dark way, there ensued a pause, both on Knut's part and on Norway's. Pause or interregnum of some months, till it became certain, first, whether Hakon were actually dead, secondly, till Norway, and especially till King Knut himself, could decide what to do. Knut, to the deep disappointment, which had to keep itself silent, of three or four chief Norway men, named none of these three or four Jarl of Norway; but bethought him of a certain Svein, a bastard son of his own,—who, and almost still more his English mother, much desired a career in the world fitter for him, thought they indignantly, than that of captain over Jomsburg, where alone the father had been able to provide for him hitherto. Svein was sent to Norway as king or vice-king for Father Knut; and along with him his fond and vehement mother. Neither of whom gained any favour from the Norse people by the kind of management they ultimately came to show.

Olaf on news of this change, and such uncertainty pre-

vailing everywhere in Norway as to the future course of things,—whether Svein would come, as was rumoured of at last, and be able to maintain himself if he did,—thought there might be something in it of a chance for himself and his rights. And, after lengthened hesitation, much prayer, pious invocation, and consideration, decided to go and try it. The final grain that had turned the balance, it appears, was a half-waking morning dream, or almost ocular vision he had of his glorious cousin Olaf Tryggveson, who severely admonished, exhorted, and encouraged him; and disappeared grandly, just in the instant of Olaf's awakening; so that Olaf almost fancied he had seen the very figure of him, as it melted into air. "Let us on, let us on!" thought Olaf always after that. He left his son, not in Russia, but in Sweden with the Queen, who proved very good and carefully helpful in wise ways to him:—in Russia Olaf had now nothing more to do but give his grateful adieus, and get ready.

His march towards Sweden, and from that towards Norway and the passes of the mountains, down Værdal, towards Sticklestad, and the crisis that awaited, is beautifully depicted by Snorro. It has, all of it, the description (and we see clearly, the fact itself had), a kind of pathetic grandeur, simplicity, and rude nobleness; something Epic or Homeric, without the metre or the singing of Homer, but with all the sincerity, rugged truth to nature, and much more of piety, devoutness, reverence for what is forever High in this Universe, than meets us in those old Greek Ballad-mongers. Singularly visual all of it, too, brought home in every particular to one's imagination, so that it stands out almost as a thing one actually saw.

Olaf had about three thousand men with him; gathered mostly as he fared along through Norway. Four hundred,

raised by one Dag, a kinsman whom he had found in Sweden and persuaded to come with him, marched usually in a separate body; and were, or might have been, rather an important element. Learning that the Bonders were all arming, especially in Trondhjem country, Olaf streamed down towards them in the closest order he could. By no means very close, subsistence even for three thousand being difficult in such a country. His speech was almost always free and cheerful, though his thoughts always naturally were of a high and earnest, almost sacred tone; devout above all. Stickelstad, a small poor hamlet still standing where the valley ends, was seen by Olaf, and tacitly by the Bonders as well, to be the natural place for offering battle. There Olaf issued out from the hills one morning: drew himself up according to the best rules of Norse tactics,—rules of little complexity, but perspicuously true to the facts. I think he had a clear open ground still rather raised above the plain in front; he could see how the Bonder army had not yet quite arrived, but was pouring forward, in spontaneous rows or groups, copiously by every path. This was thought to be the biggest army that ever met in Norway; ‘certainly not much fewer than a hundred times a hundred men,’ according to Snorro; great Bonders several of them, small Bonders very many,—all of willing mind, animated with a hot sense of intolerable injuries. ‘King Olaf had punished great and small with equal rigour,’ says Snorro; ‘which appeared to the chief people of the country too severe; and animosity rose to the highest when they lost relatives by the King’s just sentence, although they were in reality guilty. He again would rather renounce his dignity than omit righteous judgment. The accusation against him, of being stingy with his money, was not just, for he was a most generous man towards his friends. But

‘that alone was the cause of the discontent raised against him, that he appeared hard and severe in his retributions. Besides, King Knut offered large sums of money, and the great chiefs were corrupted by this, and by his offering them greater dignities than they had possessed before.’ On these grounds, against the intolerable man, great and small were now pouring along by every path.

Olaf perceived it would still be some time before the Bonder army was in rank. His own Dag of Sweden, too, was not yet come up; he was to have the right banner; King Olaf’s own being the middle or grand one; some other person the third or left banner. All which being perfectly ranked and settled, according to the best rules, and waiting only the arrival of Dag, Olaf bade his men sit down, and freshen themselves with a little rest. There were religious services gone through: a *matins*-worship such as there have been few; sternly earnest to the heart of it, and deep as death and eternity, at least on Olaf’s own part. For the rest Thormod sang a stave of the fiercest Skaldic poetry that was in him; all the army straightway sang it in chorus with fiery mind. The Bonder of the nearest farm came up, to tell Olaf that he also wished to fight for him. “Thanks to thee; but don’t,” said Olaf; “stay at home rather, that the wounded may have some shelter.” To this Bonder, Olaf delivered all the money he had, with solemn order to lay out the whole of it in masses and prayers for the souls of such of his enemies as fell. “Such of thy enemies, King?” “Yes, surely,” said Olaf, “my friends will all either conquer, or go whither I also am going.”

At last the Bonder army too was got ranked; three commanders, one of them with a kind of loose chief command, having settled to take charge of it; and began to shake itself

towards actual advance. Olaf, in the mean while, had laid his head on the knees of Finn Arneson, his trustiest man, and fallen fast asleep. Finn's brother, Kalf Arneson, once a warm friend of Olaf, was chief of the three commanders on the opposite side. Finn and he addressed angry speech to one another from the opposite ranks, when they came near enough. Finn, seeing the enemy fairly approach, stirred Olaf from his sleep. "Oh, why hast thou wakened me from such a dream?" said Olaf, in a deeply solemn tone. "What dream was it, then?" asked Finn. "I dreamt that there rose a ladder here reaching up to very Heaven," said Olaf; "I had climbed and climbed, and got to the very last step, and should have entered there hadst thou given me another moment." "King, I doubt thou art *fey*; I do not quite like that dream."

The actual fight began about one of the clock in a most bright last day of July, and was very fierce and hot, especially on the part of Olaf's men, who shook the others back a little, though fierce enough they too; and had Dag been on the ground, which he wasn't yet, it was thought victory might have been won. Soon after battle joined, the sky grew of a ghastly brass or copper colour, darker and darker, till thick night involved all things; and did not clear away again till battle was near ending. Dag, with his four hundred, arrived in the darkness, and made a furious charge, what was afterwards, in the speech of the people, called 'Dag's storm.' Which had nearly prevailed, but could not quite; victory again inclining to the so vastly larger party. It is uncertain still how the matter would have gone; for Olaf himself was now fighting with his own hand, and doing deadly execution on his busiest enemies to right and to left. But one of these chief rebels, Thorer Hund (thought to have

learnt magic from the Laplanders, whom he long traded with, and made money by), mysteriously would not fall for Olaf's best strokes. Best strokes brought only dust from the (enchanted) deer-skin coat of the fellow, to Olaf's surprise,—when another of the rebel chiefs rushed forward, struck Olaf with his battle-axe, a wild slashing wound, and miserably broke his thigh, so that he staggered or was supported back to the nearest stone; and there sat down, lamentably calling on God to help him in this bad hour. Another rebel of note (the name of him long memorable in Norway) slashed or stabbed Olaf a second time, as did then a third. Upon which the noble Olaf sank dead; and forever quitted this doghole of a world,—little worthy of such men as Olaf, one sometimes thinks. But that too is a mistake, and even an important one, should we persist in it.

With Olaf's death the sky cleared again. Battle, now near done, ended with complete victory to the rebels, and next to no pursuit or result, except the death of Olaf; everybody hastening home, as soon as the big Duel had decided itself. Olaf's body was secretly carried, after dark, to some out-house on the farm near the spot; whither a poor blind beggar, creeping in for shelter that very evening, was miraculously restored to sight. And, truly with a notable, almost miraculous, speed, the feelings of all Norway for King Olaf changed themselves, and were turned upside down, 'within a year,' or almost within a day. Superlative example of *Extinctus amabitur idem*. Not 'Olaf the Thick-set' any longer, but 'Olaf the Blessed' or Saint, now clearly in Heaven; such the name and character of him from that time to this. Two churches dedicated to him (out of four that once stood) stand in London at this moment. And the miracles that have been done there, not to speak of Norway and Christendom else-

where, in his name, were numerous and great for long centuries afterwards. Visibly a Saint Olaf ever since; and, indeed, in *Bollandus* or elsewhere, I have seldom met with better stuff to make a Saint of, or a true World-Hero in all good senses.

Speaking of the London Olaf Churches, I should have added that from one of these the thrice-famous Tooley Street gets its name,—where those Three Tailors, addressing Parliament and the Universe, sublimely styled themselves, “We, the People of England.” Saint Olave Street, Saint Oley Street, Stooley Street, Tooley Street; such are the metamorphoses of human fame in the world!

The battle-day of Sticklestad, King Olaf’s death-day, is generally believed to have been Wednesday, July 31, 1033. But on investigation, it turns out that there was no total eclipse of the sun visible in Norway that year; though three years before, there was one; but on the 29th instead of the 31st. So that the exact date still remains uncertain; Dahlmann, the latest critic, inclining for 1030, and its indisputable eclipse.³

³ *Saxon Chronicle* says expressly, under A.D. 1030: ‘In this year King Olaf was slain in Norway by his own people, and was afterwards saunted.’

CHAPTER XI.

MAGNUS THE GOOD AND OTHERS.

ST. OLAF is the highest of these Norway Kings, and is the last that much attracts us. For this reason, if a reason were not superfluous, we might here end our poor reminiscences of those dim Sovereigns. But we will, nevertheless, for the sake of their connection with bits of English History, still hastily mention the names of one or two who follow, and who throw a momentary gleam of life and illumination on events and epochs that have fallen so extinct among ourselves at present, though once they were so momentous and memorable.

The new King Svein from Jomsburg, Knut's natural son, had no success in Norway, nor seems to have deserved any. His English mother and he were found to be grasping, oppressive persons; and awoke, almost from the instant that Olaf was suppressed and crushed away from Norway into Heaven, universal odium more and more in that country. Well-deservedly, as still appears; for their taxings and extortions of malt, of herring, of meal, smithwork and every article taxable in Norway, were extreme; and their service to the country otherwise nearly imperceptible. In brief their one basis there was the power of Knut the Great; and that, like all earthly things, was liable to sudden collapse,—and it suffered such in a notable degree. King Knut, hardly yet of middle age, and the greatest King in the then world, died

at Shaftesbury, in 1035, as Dahlmann thinks,¹—leaving two legitimate sons and a busy, intriguing widow (Norman Emma, widow of Ethelred the Unready), mother of the younger of these two; neither of whom proved to have any talent or any continuance. In spite of Emma's utmost efforts, Harald, the elder son of Knut, not hers, got England for his kingdom; Emma and her Harda-Knut had to be content with Denmark, and go thither, much against their will. Harald in England, —light-going little figure like his father before him,—got the name of Harefoot here; and might have done good work among his now orderly and settled people; but he died almost within year and day; and has left no trace among us, except that of 'Harefoot,' from his swift mode of walking. Emma and her Harda-Knut now returned joyful to England. But the violent, idle, and drunken Harda-Knut did no good there; and, happily for England and him, soon suddenly ended, by stroke of apoplexy at a marriage festival, as mentioned above. In Denmark he had done still less good. And indeed, under him, in a year or two, the grand imperial edifice, laboriously built by Knut's valour and wisdom, had already tumbled all to the ground, in a most unexpected and remarkable way. As we are now to indicate with all brevity.

Svein's tyrannies in Norway had wrought such fruit that, within the four years after Olaf's death, the chief men in Norway, the very slayers of King Olaf, Kalf Arneson at the head of them, met secretly once or twice; and unanimously agreed that Kalf Arneson must go to Sweden, or to Russia itself; seek young Magnus, son of Olaf, home: excellent Magnus, to be king over all Norway and them, instead of

¹ *Saxon Chronicle* says: '1035. In this year died King Cnut. . . . He departed at Shaftesbury, November 12, and they conveyed him thence to Winchester, and there buried him.'

this intolerable Svein. Which was at once done,—Magnus brought home in a kind of triumph, all Norway waiting for him. Intolerable Svein had already been rebelled against: some years before this, a certain young Tryggve out of Ireland, authentic son of Olaf Tryggveson and of that fine Irish Princess who chose him in his low habiliments and low estate, and took him over to her own Green Island,—this royal young Tryggve Olafson had invaded the usurper Svein, in a fierce, valiant, and determined manner; and though with too small a party, showed excellent fight for some time; till Svein, zealously bestirring himself, managed to get him beaten and killed. But that was a couple of years ago; the party still too small, not including one and all as now! Svein, without stroke of sword this time, moved off towards Denmark; never showing face in Norway again. His drunken brother, Harda-Knut, received him brother-like; even gave him some territory to rule over and subsist upon. But he lived only a short while; was gone before Harda-Knut himself; and we will mention him no more.

Magnus was a fine bright young fellow, and proved a valiant, wise, and successful King, known among his people as Magnus the Good. He was only natural son of King Olaf; but that made little difference in those times and there. His strange-looking, unexpected Latin name he got in this way: Alfild, his mother, a slave through ill-luck of war, though nobly born, was seen to be in a hopeful way; and it was known in the King's house how intimately Olaf was connected with that occurrence, and how much he loved this 'King's serving-maid,' as she was commonly designated. Alfild was brought to bed late at night; and all the world, especially King Olaf, was asleep; Olaf's strict rule, then and always, being, Don't awaken me:—seemingly a man sensi-

tive about his sleep. The child was a boy, of rather weakly aspect; no important person present, except Sigvat, the King's Icelandic Skald, who happened to be still awake; and the Bishop of Norway, who, I suppose, had been sent for in hurry. "What is to be done?" said the Bishop: "here is an infant in pressing need of baptism; and we know not what the name is: go, Sigvat, awaken the King, and ask." "I dare not for my life," answered Sigvat; "King's orders are rigorous on that point." "But if the child die unbaptised," said the Bishop, shuddering; too certain, he and everybody, where the child would go in that case! "I will myself give him a name," said Sigvat, with a desperate concentration of all his faculties; "he shall be namesake of the greatest of mankind,—imperial Carolus Magnus; let us call the infant Magnus!" King Olaf, on the morrow, asked rather sharply how Sigvat had dared take such a liberty; but excused Sigvat, seeing what the perilous alternative was. And Magnus, by such accident, this boy was called; and he, not another, is the prime origin and introducer of that name Magnus, which occurs rather frequently, not among the Norman Kings only, but by and by among the Danish and Swedish; and, among the Scandinavian populations, appears to be rather frequent to this day.

Magnus, a youth of great spirit, whose own, and standing at his beck, all Norway now was, immediately smote home on Denmark; desirous naturally of vengeance for what it had done to Norway, and the sacred kindred of Magnus. Denmark, its great Knut gone, and nothing but a drunken Harda-Knut, fugitive Svein and Co., there in his stead, was become a weak dislocated Country. And Magnus plundered in it, burnt it, beat it, as often as he pleased; Harda-Knut struggling what he could to make resistance or reprisals, but

never once getting any victory over Magnus. Magnus, I perceive, was, like his Father, a skilful as well as valiant fighter by sea and land; Magnus, with good battalions, and probably backed by immediate alliance with Heaven and St. Olaf, as was then the general belief or surmise about him, could not easily be beaten. And the truth is, he never was, by Harda-Knut or any other. Harda-Knut's last transaction with him was, To make a firm Peace and even Family-treaty sanctioned by all the grandees of both countries, who did indeed mainly themselves make it; their two Kings assenting: That there should be perpetual Peace, and no thought of war more, between Denmark and Norway; and that, if either of the Kings died childless while the other was reigning, the other should succeed him in both Kingdoms. A magnificent arrangement, such as has several times been made in the world's history; but which in this instance, what is very singular, took actual effect; drunken Harda-Knut dying so speedily, and Magnus being the man he was. One would like to give the date of this remarkable Treaty; but cannot with precision. Guess somewhere about 1040:² actual fruition of it came to Magnus, beyond question, in 1042, when Harda-Knut drank that wassail bowl at the wedding in Lambeth, and fell down dead; which in the Saxon Chronicle is dated 3d June of that year. Magnus at once went to Denmark on hearing this event; was joyfully received by the head men there, who indeed, with their fellows in Norway, had been main contrivers of the Treaty; both Countries longing for mutual peace, and the end of such incessant broils.

Magnus was triumphantly received as King in Denmark. The only unfortunate thing was, that Svein Estrithson, the exile son of Ulf, Knut's Brother-in-law, whom Knut, as we

² Munch gives the date 1033 (ii. 840), Adam of Bremen 1040.

saw, had summarily killed twelve years before, emerged from his exile in Sweden in a flattering form; and proposed that Magnus should make him Jarl of Denmark, and general administrator there, in his own stead. To which the sanguine Magnus, in spite of advice to the contrary, insisted on acceding. "Too powerful a Jarl," said Einar Tamberskelver—the same Einar whose bow was heard to break in Olaf Tryggveson's last battle ("Norway breaking from thy hand, King!"), who had now become Magnus's chief man, and had long been among the highest chiefs in Norway; "too powerful a Jarl," said Einar earnestly. But Magnus disregarded it; and a troublesome experience had to teach him that it was true. In about a year, crafty Svein, bringing ends to meet, got himself declared King of Denmark for his own behoof, instead of Jarl for another's: and had to be beaten and driven out by Magnus. Beaten every year; but almost always returned next year, for a new beating,—almost, though not altogether; having at length got one dreadful smashing-down and half-killing, which held him quiet for a while,—so long as Magnus lived. Nay in the end, he made good his point, as if by mere patience in being beaten; and did become King himself, and progenitor of all the Kings that followed. King Svein Estrithson; so called from Astrid or Estrith, his mother, the great Knut's sister, daughter of Svein Forkbeard by that amazing Sigrid the Proud, who *burnt* those two ineligible suitors of hers both at once, and got a switch on the face from Olaf Tryggveson, which proved the death of that high man.

But all this fine fortune of the often beaten Estrithson was posterior to Magnus's death; who never would have suffered it, had he been alive. Magnus was a mighty fighter; a fiery man; very proud and positive, among other qualities, and

had such luck as was never seen before. Luck invariably good, said everybody; never once was beaten,—which proves, continued everybody, that his Father Olaf and the miraculous power of Heaven were with him always. Magnus, I believe, did put down a great deal of anarchy in those countries. One of his earliest enterprises was to abolish Jomsburg, and trample out that nest of pirates. Which he managed so completely that Jomsburg remained a mere reminiscence thenceforth; and its place is not now known to any mortal.

One perverse thing did at last turn up in the course of Magnus: a new Claimant for the Crown of Norway, and he a formidable person withal. This was Harald, half-brother of the late Saint Olaf; uncle or half-uncle, therefore, of Magnus himself. Indisputable son of the Saint's mother by St. Olaf's stepfather, who was himself descended straight from Harald Haarfagr. This new Harald was already much heard of in the world. As an ardent Boy of fifteen he had fought at King Olaf's side at Stikkelstad; would not be admonished by the Saint to go away. Got smitten down there, not killed; was smuggled away that night from the field by friendly help; got cured of his wounds, forwarded to Russia, where he grew to man's estate, under bright auspices and successes. Fell in love with the Russian Princess, but could not get her to wife; went off thereupon to Constantinople as *Væring*er (Life-Guardsman of the Greek Kaiser); became Chief Captain of the *Væring*ers, invincible champion of the poor Kaisers that then were, and filled all the East with the shine and noise of his exploits. An authentic *Waring* or *Baring*, such the surname we now have derived from these people; who were an important institution in those Greek countries for several ages: *Væring*er Life-Guard, consisting of Norsemen,

with sometimes a few English among them. Harald had innumerable adventures, nearly always successful, sing the Skalds; gained a great deal of wealth, gold ornaments, and gold coin; had even Queen Zoe (so they sing, though falsely) enamoured of him at one time; and was himself a Skald of eminence; some of whose verses, by no means the worst of their kind, remain to this day.

This character of Waring much distinguishes Harald to me; the only Væring of whom I could ever get the least biography, true or half-true. It seems the Greek History-books but indifferently correspond with these Saga records; and scholars say there could have been no considerable romance between Zoe and him, Zoe at that date being 60 years of age! Harald's own lays say nothing of any Zoe, but are still full of longing for his Russian Princess far away.

At last, what with Zoes, what with Greek perversities and perfidies, and troubles that could not fail, he determined on quitting Greece; packed up his immensities of wealth in succinct shape, and actually returned to Russia, where new honours and favours awaited him from old friends, and especially, if I mistake not, the hand of that adorable Princess, crown of all his wishes for the time being. Before long, however, he decided farther to look after his Norway Royal heritages; and, for that purpose, sailed in force to the Jarl or quasi-King of Denmark, the often-beaten Svein, who was now in Sweden on his usual winter exile after beating Svein and he had evidently interests in common. Svein was charmed to see him,—so warlike, glorious and renowned a man, with masses of money about him, too. Svein did by and by become treacherous; and even attempted, one night, to assassinate Harald in his bed on board ship: but Harald,

vigilant of Svein, and a man of quick and sure insight, had providently gone to sleep elsewhere, leaving a log instead of himself among the blankets. In which log, next morning, treacherous Svein's battle-axe was found deeply sticking: and could not be removed without difficulty! But this was after Harald and King Magnus himself had begun treating; with the fairest prospects,—which this of the Svein battle-axe naturally tended to forward, as it altogether ended the other copartnery.

Magnus, on first hearing of Væringers Harald and his intentions, made instant equipment, and determination to fight his uttermost against the same. But wise persons of influence round him, as did the like sort round Væringers Harald, earnestly advised compromise and peaceable agreement. Which, soon after that of Svein's nocturnal battle-axe, was the course adopted; and, to the joy of all parties, did prove a successful solution. Magnus agreed to part his kingdom with Uncle Harald; uncle parting his treasures, or uniting them with Magnus's poverty. Each was to be an independent king, but they were to govern in common; Magnus rather presiding. He, to sit, for example in the High Seat alone; King Harald opposite him in a seat not quite so high, though if a stranger King came on a visit, both the Norse Kings were to sit in the High Seat. With various other punctilious regulations; which the fiery Magnus was extremely strict with; rendering the mutual relation a very dangerous one, had not both the Kings been honest men, and Harald a much more prudent and tolerant one than Magnus. They, on the whole, never had any weighty quarrel, thanks now and then rather to Harald than to Magnus. Magnus too was very noble; and Harald, with his wide experience and greater length of years, carefully held his heat of temper well covered in.

Prior to Uncle Harald's coming, Magnus had distinguished himself as a Lawgiver. His Code of Laws for the Trondhjem Province was considered a pretty piece of legislation; and in subsequent times got the name of *Grey-goose* (Grågas); one of the wonderfulest names ever given to a wise Book. Some say it came from the grey colour of the parchment, some give other incredible origins; the last guess I have heard is, that the name merely denotes antiquity; the witty name in Norway for a man growing old having been, in those times, that he was now 'becoming a grey-goose.' Very fantastic indeed; certain, however, that Grey-goose is the name of that venerable Law Book; nay, there is another, still more famous, belonging to Iceland, and not far from a century younger, the Iceland *Grey-goose*. The Norway one is perhaps of date about 1037, the other of about 1118; peace be with them both! Or, if anybody is inclined to such matters let him go to Dahlmann, for the amplest information and such minuteness of detail as might almost enable him to be an Advocate, with Silk Gown, in any Court depending on these Grey-geese.

Magnus did not live long. He had a dream one night of his Father Olaf's coming to him in shining presence, and announcing, That a magnificent fortune and world-great renown was now possible for him; but that perhaps it was his duty to refuse it; in which case his earthly life would be short. "Which way wilt thou do, then?" said the shining presence. "Thou shalt decide for me, Father, thou, not I!" and told his Uncle Harald on the morrow, adding that he thought he should now soon die; which proved to be the fact. The magnificent fortune, so questionable otherwise, has reference, no doubt, to the Conquest of England; to which country Magnus, as rightful and actual King of Den-

mark, as well as undisputed heir to drunken Harda-Knut, by treaty long ago, had now some evident claim. The enterprise itself was reserved to the patient, gay, and prudent Uncle Harald; and to him it did prove fatal,—and merely paved the way for Another, luckier, not likelier!

Svein Estrithson, always beaten during Magnus's life, by and by got an agreement from the prudent Harald to be King of Denmark, then; and end these wearisome and ineffectual brabbles; Harald having other work to do. But in the autumn of 1066, Tosti, a younger son of our English Earl Godwin, came to Svein's court with a most important announcement; namely, that King Edward the Confessor, so called, was dead, and that Harold, as the English write it, his eldest brother would give him, Tosti, no sufficient share in the kingship. Which state of matters, if Svein would go ahead with him to rectify it, would be greatly to the advantage of Svein. Svein, taught by many beatings, was too wise for this proposal; refused Tosti, who indignantly stepped over into Norway, and proposed it to King Harald there. Svein really had acquired considerable teaching, I should guess, from his much beating and hard experience in the world; one finds him afterwards the esteemed friend of the famous Historian Adam of Bremen, who reports various wise humanities, and pleasant discourses with Svein Estrithson.

As for Harald Hardrade, 'Harald the Hard or Severe,' as he was now called, Tosti's proposal awakened in him all his old Væringers ambitions and cupidities into blazing vehemence. He zealously consented; and at once, with his whole strength, embarked in the adventure. Fitted out two hundred ships, and the biggest army he could carry in them; and sailed with Tosti towards the dangerous Pro-

mised Land. Got into the Tyne, and took booty; got into the Humber, thence into the Ouse; easily subdued any opposition the official people or their populations could make; victoriously scattered these, victoriously took the City of York in a day; and even got himself homaged there, 'King of Northumberland,' as per covenant,—Tosti proving honourable,—Tosti and he going with faithful strict copartnery, and all things looking prosperous and glorious. Except only (an important exception!) that they learnt for certain, English Harold was advancing with all his strength; and, in a measurable space of hours, unless care were taken, would be in York himself. Harald and Tosti hastened off to seize the post of Stamford Bridge on Derwent River, six or seven miles east of York City, and there bar this dangerous advent. Their own ships lay not far off in Ouse River, in case of the worst. The battle that ensued the next day, September 20, 1066, is forever memorable in English history.

Snorro gives vividly enough his view of it from the Icelandic side: A ring of stalwart Norsemen, close ranked, with their steel tools in hand; English Harold's Army, mostly cavalry, prancing and pricking all around; trying to find or make some opening in that ring. For a long time trying in vain, till at length, getting them enticed to burst out somewhere in pursuit, they quickly turned round, and quickly made an end of that matter. Snorro represents English Harold, with a first party of these horse coming up, and, with preliminary salutations, asking if Tosti were there, and if Harald were; making generous proposals to Tosti; but, in regard to Harald and what share of England was to be his, answering Tosti with the words, "Seven feet of English earth, or more if he require it, for a grave."

Upon which Tosti, like an honourable man and copartner, said, "No, never; let us fight you rather till we all die." "Who is this that spoke to you?" inquired Harald, when the cavaliers had withdrawn. "My brother Harold," answers Tosti; which looks rather like a Saga, but may be historical after all. Snorro's history of the battle is intelligible only after you have premised to it, what he never hints at, that the scene was on the east side of the bridge and of the Derwent; the great struggle for the bridge, one at last finds, was after the fall of Harald; and to the English Chroniclers, said struggle, which was abundantly severe, is all they know of the battle.

Enraged at that breaking loose of his steel ring of infantry, Norse Harald blazed up into true Norse fury, all the old Væringers and Berserkir rage awakening in him; sprang forth into the front of the fight, and mauled and cut and smashed down, on both hands of him, everything he met, irresistible by any horse or man, till an arrow cut him through the wind-pipe, and laid him low forever. That was the end of King Harald and of his workings in this world. The circumstance that he was a Waring or Baring, and had smitten to pieces so many Oriental cohorts or crowds, and had made love-verses (kind of *iron* madrigals) to his Russian Princess, and caught the fancy of questionable Greek queens, and had amassed such heaps of money, while poor nephew Magnus had only one gold ring (which had been his father's, and even his father's *mother's*, as Uncle Harald noticed), and nothing more whatever of that precious metal to combine with Harald's treasures:—all this is new to me, naturally no hint of it in any English book; and lends some gleam of romantic splendour to that dim business of Stamford Bridge, now fallen so dull and torpid to most English minds, tran-

scendently important as it once was to all Englishmen. Adam of Bremen says, the English got as much gold plunder from Harald's people as was a heavy burden for twelve men;³ a thing evidently impossible, which nobody need try to believe. Young Olaf, Harald's son, age about sixteen, steering down the Ouse at the top of his speed, escaped home to Norway with all his ships, and subsequently reigned there with Magnus, his brother. Harald's body did lie in English earth for about a year; but was then brought to Norway for burial. He needed more than seven feet of grave, say some; Laing, interpreting Snorro's measurements, makes Harald eight feet in stature,—I do hope, with some error in excess!

* Camden, Rapin, &c. quote.

CHAPTER XII.

OLAF THE TRANQUIL, MAGNUS BAREFOOT, AND SIGURD THE CRUSADER.

THE new King Olaf, his brother Magnus having soon died, bore rule in Norway for some five-and-twenty years. Rule soft and gentle, not like his father's, and inclining rather to improvement in the arts and elegancies than to anything severe or dangerously laborious. A slim-built, witty-talking, popular and pretty man, with uncommonly bright eyes, and hair like floss silk: they called him Olaf *Kyrre* (the Tranquil or Easy-going).

The ceremonials of the palace were much improved by him. Palace still continued to be built of huge logs pyramidally sloping upwards, with fireplace in the middle of the floor, and no egress for smoke or ingress for light except right overhead, which, in bad weather, you could shut, or all but shut, with a lid. Lid originally made of mere opaque board, but changed latterly into a light frame, covered (*glazed*, so to speak) with entrails of animals, clarified into something of pellucidity. All this Olaf, I hope, further perfected, as he did the placing of the court ladies, court officials, and the like; but I doubt if the luxury of a glass window were ever known to him, or a cup to drink from that was not made of metal or horn. In fact it is chiefly for his son's sake I mention him here; and with the son, too, I have little real concern, but only a kind of fantastic.

This son bears the name of Magnus *Barefoot* (Barefoot, or Bareleg); and if you ask why so, the answer is: He was used to appear in the streets of Nidaros (Trondhjem) now and then in complete Scotch Highland dress. Authentic tartan plaid and philibeg, at that epoch,—to the wonder of Trondhjem and us! The truth is, he had a mighty fancy for those Hebrides and other Scotch possessions of his; and seeing England now quite impossible, eagerly speculated on some conquest in Ireland as next best. He did, in fact, go diligently voyaging and inspecting among those Orkney and Hebridian Isles; putting everything straight there, appointing stringent authorities, jarls,—nay, a king, ‘Kingdom of the Suderöer’ (Southern Isles, now called *Sodor*),—and, as first king, Sigurd, his pretty little boy of nine years. All which done, and some quarrel with Sweden fought out, he seriously applied himself to visiting in a still more emphatic manner; namely, to invading, with his best skill and strength, the considerable virtual or actual kingdom he had in Ireland, intending fully to enlarge it to the utmost limits of the Island if possible. He got prosperously into Dublin (guess A.D. 1102). Considerable authority he already had, even among those poor Irish Kings, or kinglets, ‘in their glibs and yellow-saffron gowns; still more, I suppose, among the numerous Norse Principalities there. ‘King Murdog, ‘King of Ireland,’ says the Chronicle of Man, ‘had obliged ‘himself, every Yule-day, to take a pair of shoes, hang them ‘over his shoulder, as your servant does on a journey, and ‘walk across his court, at bidding and in presence of Magnus ‘Barefoot’s messenger, by way of homage to the said King.’ Murdog on this greater occasion did whatever homage could be required of him; but that, though comfortable, was far from satisfying the great King’s ambitious mind. The great

King left Murdog; left his own Dublin; marched off westward on a general conquest of Ireland. Marched easily victorious for a time; and got, some say, into the wilds of Connaught, but there saw himself beset by ambuscades and wild Irish countenances intent on mischief; and had, on the sudden, to draw up for battle;—place, I regret to say, altogether undiscoverable to me; known only that it was boggy in the extreme. Certain enough, too certain and evident, Magnus Barefoot, searching eagerly, could find no firm footing there; nor, fighting furiously up to the knees or deeper, any result but honourable death! Date is confidently marked ‘24 August 1103,’—as if people knew the very day of the month. The natives did humanely give King Magnus Christian burial. The remnants of his force, without further molestation, found their ships on the Coast of Ulster; and sailed home,—without conquest of Ireland; nay perhaps, leaving royal Murdog disposed to be relieved of his procession with the pair of shoes.

Magnus Barefoot left three sons, all kings at once, reigning peaceably together. But to us, at present, the only noteworthy one of them was Sigurd; who, finding nothing special to do at home, left his brothers to manage for him, and went off on a far Voyage, which has rendered him distinguishable in the crowd. Voyage through the Straits of Gibraltar, on to Jerusalem, thence to Constantinople; and so home through Russia, shining with such renown as filled all Norway for the time being. A King called Sigurd Jorsalafarer (*Jerusalemmer*) or Sigurd the Crusader henceforth. His voyage had been only partially of the Viking type; in general it was of the Royal-Progress kind rather; Vikingism only intervening in cases of incivility or the like. His reception in the Courts of Portugal, Spain, Sicily, Italy, had been honourable and

sumptuous. The King of Jerusalem broke out into utmost splendour and effusion at sight of such a pilgrim ; and Constantinople did its highest honours to such a Prince of Væringers. And the truth is, Sigurd intrinsically was a wise, able, and prudent man ; who, surviving both his brothers, reigned a good while alone in a solid and successful way. He shows features of an original, independent-thinking man ; something of ruggedly strong, sincere, and honest, with peculiarities that are amiable and even pathetic in the character and temperament of him ; as certainly, the course of life he took was of his own choosing, and peculiar enough. He happens furthermore to be, what he least of all could have chosen or expected, the last of the Haarfagr Genealogy that had any success, or much deserved any, in this world. The last of the Haarfags, or as good as the last ! So that, singular to say, it is in reality, for one thing only that Sigurd, after all his crusadings and wonderful adventures, is memorable to us here : the advent of an Irish gentleman called ‘Gylle Krist’ (Gil-christ, Servant of Christ), who,—not over welcome, I should think, but (unconsciously) big with the above result,—appeared in Norway, while King Sigurd was supreme. Let us explain a little.

This Gylle Krist, the unconsciously fatal individual, who, spoke Norse imperfectly, declared himself to be the natural son of whilom Magnus Barefoot ; born to him there while engaged in that unfortunate ‘Conquest of Ireland.’ “Here is my mother come with me,” said Gilchrist, “who declares my real baptismal name to have been Harald, given me by that great King ; and who will carry the red-hot ploughshares or do any reasonable ordeal in testimony of these facts. I am King Sigurd’s veritable half-brother : what will King Sigurd think it fair to do with me ?” Sigurd clearly seems

to have believed the man to be speaking truth; and indeed nobody to have doubted but he was. Sigurd said, "Honourable sustenance shalt thou have from me here. But, under pain of extirpation, swear that, neither in my time, nor in that of my young son Magnus, wilt thou ever claim any share in this Government." Gylle swore; and punctually kept his promise during Sigurd's reign. But during Magnus's, he conspicuously broke it; and, in result, through many reigns, and during three or four generations afterwards, produced unspeakable contentions, massacrings, confusions in the country he had adopted. There are reckoned, from the time of Sigurd's death (A.D. 1130), about a hundred years of civil war: no king allowed to distinguish himself by a solid reign of well-doing, or by any continuing reign at all,—sometimes as many as four kings simultaneously fighting;—and in Norway, from sire to son, nothing but sanguinary anarchy, disaster and bewilderment; a Country sinking steadily as if towards absolute ruin. Of all which frightful misery and discord Irish Gylle, styled afterwards King Harald Gylle, was, by ill destiny and otherwise, the visible origin: an illegitimate Irish Haarfagr who proved to be his own destruction, and that of the Haarfagr kindred altogether!

Sigurd himself seems always to have rather favoured Gylle, who was a cheerful, shrewd, patient, witty, and effective fellow; and had at first much quizzing to endure, from the younger kind, on account of his Irish way of speaking Norse, and for other reasons. One evening, for example, while the drink was going round, Gylle mentioned that the Irish had a wonderful talent of swift running, and that there were among them people who could keep up with the swiftest horse. At which, especially from young Magnus, there were

peals of laughter; and a declaration from the latter that Gylle and he would have it tried tomorrow morning! Gylle in vain urged that he had not himself professed to be so swift a runner as to keep up with the Prince's horses; but only that there were men in Ireland who could. Magnus was positive; and, early next morning, Gylle had to be on the ground; and the race, naturally under heavy bet, actually went off. Gylle started parallel to Magnus's stirrup; ran like a very roe, and was clearly ahead at the goal. "Unfair," said Magnus; "thou must have had hold of my stirrup-leather, and helped thyself along; we must try it again." Gylle ran behind the horse this second time; then at the end, sprang forward; and again was fairly in ahead. "Thou must have held by the tail," said Magnus; "not by fair running was this possible; we must try a third time!" Gylle started ahead of Magnus and his horse, this third time; kept ahead with increasing distance, Magnus galloping his very best; and reached the goal more palpably foremost than ever. So that Magnus had to pay his bet, and other damage and humiliation. And got from his father, who heard of it soon afterwards, scoffing rebuke as a silly fellow, who did not know the worth of men, but only the clothes and rank of them, and well deserved what he had got from Gylle. All the time King Sigurd lived, Gylle seems to have had good recognition and protection from that famous man; and, indeed, to have gained favour all round, by his quiet social demeanour and the qualities he showed.

CHAPTER XIII.

MAGNUS THE BLIND, HARALD GYLLE, AND MUTUAL EXTINCTION OF THE HAARFAGRS.

ON Sigurd the Crusader's death, Magnus naturally came to the throne; Gylle keeping silence and a cheerful face for the time. But it was not long till claim arose on Gylle's part, till war and fight arose between Magnus and him, till the skilful, popular, ever-active and shifty Gylle had entirely beaten Magnus; put out his eyes; mutilated the poor body of him in a horrid and unnameable manner, and shut him up in a convent as out of the game henceforth. There in his dark misery Magnus lived now as a monk; called 'Magnus the Blind' by those Norse populations; King Harald Gylle reigning victoriously in his stead. But this also was only for a time. There arose avenging kinsfolk of Magnus, who had no Irish accent in their Norse, and were themselves eager enough to bear rule in their native country. By one of these, —a terribly strong-handed, fighting, violent, and regardless fellow, who also was a Bastard of Magnus Barefoot's, and had been made a Priest, but liked it unbearably ill, and had broken loose from it into the wildest courses at home and abroad; so that his current name got to be 'Slembi-diakn,' Slim or Ill Deacon, under which he is much noised of in Snorro and the Sagas: by this Slim-Deacon, Gylle was put an end to (murdered by night, drunk in his sleep); and poor blind Magnus was brought out, and again set to act as King, or King's Cloak, in hopes Gylle's posterity would never rise

to victory more. But Gylle's posterity did, to victory and also to defeat, and were the death of Magnus and of Slim-Deacon too, in a frightful way; and all got their own death by and by in a ditto. In brief, these two kindreds (reckoned to be authentic enough Haarfagr people, both kinds of them) proved now to have become a veritable crop of dragon's teeth; who mutually fought, plotted, struggled, as if it had been their life's business; never ended fighting, and seldom long intermitted it, till they had exterminated one another, and did at last all rest in death. One of these later Gylle temporary Kings I remember by the name of Harald Herdebred, Harald of the Broad Shoulders. The very last of them I think was Harald Mund (Harald of the *Wry-Mouth*), who gave rise to two Impostors, pretending to be Sons of his, a good while after the poor Wry-Mouth itself and all its troublesome belongings were quietly under ground. What Norway suffered during that sad century may be imagined.

CHAPTER XIV.

SVERRIR AND DESCENDANTS, TO HAKON THE OLD.

THE end of it was, or rather the first abatement, and *beginning* of the end, That, when all this had gone on ever worsening for some forty years or so, one Sverrir (A.D. 1177), at the head of an armed mob of poor people called *Birkebeins*, came upon the scene. A strange enough figure in History, this Sverrir and his *Birkebeins*! At first a mere mockery and dismal laughing-stock to the enlightened Norway public. Nevertheless by unheard-of fighting, hungering, exertion, and endurance, Sverrir, after ten years of such a death-wrestle against men and things, got himself accepted as King; and by wonderful expenditure of ingenuity, common cunning, unctuous Parliamentary Eloquence or almost Popular Preaching, and (it must be owned) general human faculty and valour (or value) in the overclouded and distorted state, did victoriously continue such. And founded a new Dynasty in Norway, which ended only with Norway's separate existence, after near three hundred years.

This Sverrir called himself a Son of Harald Wry-Mouth; but was in reality the son of a poor Comb-maker in some little town of Norway; nothing heard of Sonship to Wry-Mouth till after good success otherwise. His *Birkebeins* (that is to say, *Birchlegs*; the poor rebellious wretches having taken to the woods; and been obliged, besides their intolerable scarcity of food, to thatch their bodies from the cold with whatever covering could be got, and their legs espe

cially with birch bark ; sad species of fleecy hosiery ; whence their nickname),—his Birkebeins I guess always to have been a kind of Norse *Jacquerie*: desperate rising of thralls and indigent people, driven mad by their unendurable sufferings and famishings,—theirs the *deepest* stratum of misery, and the densest and heaviest, in this the general misery of Norway, which had lasted towards the third generation and looked as if it would last forever:—whereupon they had risen proclaiming, in this furious dumb manner, *unintelligible* except to Heaven, that the same could not, nor would not, be endured any longer ! And, by their Sverrir, strange to say, they did attain a kind of permanent success ; and, from being a dismal laughing-stock in Norway, came to be important, and for a time all-important there. Their opposition nicknames, ‘*Bag-lers* (from Bagall, *baculus*, bishop’s staff ; Bishop Nicholas ‘being chief Leader),’ ‘*Gold-legs*,’ and the like obscure terms (for there was still a considerable course of counter-fighting ahead, and especially of counter-nicknaming), I take to have meant in Norse prefigurement seven centuries ago, ‘bloated Aristocracy,’ ‘tyrannous *Bourgeoisie*,’—till, in the next century, these rents were closed again !—

King Sverrir, not himself bred to comb-making, had, in his fifth year, gone to an uncle, Bishop in the Farøe Islands ; and got some considerable education from him, with a view to Priesthood on the part of Sverrir. But, not liking that career, Sverrir had fled and smuggled himself over to the Birkebeins ; who, noticing the learned tongue, and other miraculous qualities of the man, proposed to make him Captain of them ; and even threatened to kill him if he would not accept,—which thus at the sword’s point, as Sverrir says, he was obliged to do. It was after this that he thought of becoming son of Wry-Mouth and other higher things.

His Birkebeins and he had certainly a talent of campaigning which has hardly ever been equalled. They fought like devils against any odds of number; and before battle they have been known to march six days together without food, except, perhaps, the inner barks of trees, and in such clothing and shoeing as mere birch bark:—at one time, somewhere in the Dovrefjeld, there was serious counsel held among them whether they should not all, as one man, leap down into the frozen gulfs and precipices, or at once massacre one another wholly, and so finish. Of their conduct in battle, fiercer than that of *Baresarks*, where was there ever seen the parallel? In truth they are a dim strange object to one, in that black time; wondrously bringing light into it withal; and proved to be, under such unexpected circumstances, the beginning of better days!

Of Sverrir's public speeches there still exist authentic specimens; wonderful indeed, and much characteristic of such a Sverrir. A comb-maker King, evidently meaning several good and solid things; and effecting them too, athwart such an element of Norwegian chaos-come-again. His descendants and successors were a comparatively respectable kin. The last and greatest of them I shall mention is Hakon VII., or Hakon the Old; whose fame is still lively among us, from the Battle of Largs at least.

CHAPTER XV.

HAKON THE OLD AT LARGS.

IN the Norse annals our famous Battle of Largs makes small figure, or almost none at all among Hakon's battles and feats. They do say indeed, these Norse annalists, that the King of Scotland, Alexander III. (who had such a fate among the crags about Kinghorn in time coming), was very anxious to purchase from King Hakon his sovereignty of the Western Isles; but that Hakon pointedly refused; and at length, being again importuned and bothered on the business, decided on giving a refusal that could not be mistaken. Decided, namely, to go with a big expedition, and look thoroughly into that wing of his Dominions; where no doubt much has fallen awry since Magnus Barefoot's grand visit thither, and seems to be inviting the cupidity of bad neighbours! "All this we will put right again," thinks Hakon, "and gird it up into a safe and defensive posture." Hakon sailed accordingly, with a strong fleet; adjusting and rectifying among his Hebrides as he went along, and landing withal on the Scotch coast to plunder and punish as he thought fit. The Scots say he had claimed of them Arran, Bute, and the Two Cumbraes ("given my ancestors by Donald Bain," said Hakon, to the amazement of the Scots) "as part of the Sudöer" (Southern Isles):—so far from selling that fine kingdom!—and that it was after taking both Arran and Bute that he made his descent at Largs.

Of Largs there is no mention whatever in Norse books,

But beyond any doubt, such is the other evidence, Hakon did land there; land and fight, not conquering, probably rather beaten; and very certainly 'retiring to his ships,' as in either case he behoved to do! It is further certain he was dreadfully maltreated by the weather on those wild coasts; and altogether credible, as the Scotch records bear, that he was so at Largs very specially. The Norse Records or Sagas say merely, he lost many of his ships by the tempests, and many of his men by land fighting in various parts,—tacitly including Largs, no doubt, which was the last of these misfortunes to him. 'In the battle here he lost 15,000 men, say the Scots, we 5,000'! Divide these numbers by ten, and the excellently brief and lucid Scottish summary by Buchanan may be taken as the approximately true and exact.¹ Date of the battle is A.D. 1263.

To this day, on a little plain to the south of the village, now town, of Largs, in Ayrshire, there are seen stone cairns and monumental heaps, and, until within a century ago, one huge, solitary, upright stone; still mutely testifying to a battle there,—altogether clearly, to this battle of King Hakon's; who by the Norse records, too, was in these neighbourhoods at that same date, and evidently in an aggressive, high kind of humour. For 'while his ships and army were 'doubling the Mull of Cantire, he had his own boat set on 'wheels, and therein, splendidly enough, had himself drawn 'across the Promontory at a flatter part,' no doubt with horns sounding, banners waving. "All to the left of me is mine and Norway's," exclaimed Hakon in his triumphant boat progress, which such disasters soon followed.

Hakon gathered his wrecks together, and sorrowfully made for Orkney. It is possible enough, as our Guide Books

¹ *Buchanan's Hist.* i. 130.

now say, he may have gone by Iona, Mull, and the narrow seas inside of Skye; and that the *Kyle-Akin*, favourably known to sea-bathers in that region, may actually mean the *Kyle* (narrow strait) of Hakon, where Hakon may have dropped anchor, and rested for a little while in smooth water and beautiful environment, safe from equinoctial storms. But poor Hakon's heart was now broken. He went to Orkney; died there in the winter; never beholding Norway more.

He it was who got Iceland, which had been a Republic for four centuries, united to his kingdom of Norway: a long and intricate operation,—much presided over by our Snorro Sturleson, so often quoted here, who indeed lost his life (by assassination from his sons-in-law) and out of great wealth sank at once into poverty of zero,—one midnight in his own cellar, in the course of that bad business. Hakon was a great Politician in his time; and succeeded in many things before he lost Largs. Snorro's death by murder had happened about twenty years before Hakon's by broken heart. He is called Hakon the Old, though one finds his age was but fifty-nine, probably a longish life for a Norway King. Snorro's narrative ceases when Snorro himself was born; that is to say, at the threshold of King Sverrir; of whose exploits and doubtful birth it is guessed by some that Snorro willingly forbore to speak in the hearing of such a Hakon.

CHAPTER XVI.

EPILOGUE.

HAARFAGR'S kindred lasted some three centuries in Norway; Sverrir's lasted into its third century there; how long after this, among the neighbouring kinships, I did not inquire. For, by regal affinities, consanguinities, and unexpected chances and changes, the three Scandinavian kingdoms fell all peaceably together under Queen Margaret, of the Calmar Union (A.D. 1397); and Norway, incorporated now with Denmark, needed no more kings.

The History of these Haarfagrs has awakened in me many thoughts : Of Despotism and Democracy, arbitrary government by one and self-government (which means no government, or anarchy) by all ; of Dictatorship with many faults, and Universal Suffrage with little possibility of any virtue. For the contrast between Olaf Tryggveson and a Universal-Suffrage Parliament or an 'Imperial' Copper Captain has, in these nine centuries, grown to be very great. And the eternal Providence that guides all this, and produces alike these entities with their epochs, is not *its* course still through the great deep ? Does not it still speak to us, if we have ears ? Here, clothed in stormy enough passions and instincts, unconscious of any aim but their own satisfaction, is the blessed beginning of Human Order, Regulation, and real Government; there, clothed in a highly different, but again suitable garniture of passions, instincts, and equally unconscious as to real aim, is the accursed-looking ending (tem-

porary ending) of Order, Regulation, and Government;—very dismal to the sane onlooker for the time being; not dismal to him otherwise, his hope, too, being steadfast! But here, at any rate, in this poor Norse theatre, one looks with interest on the first transformation, so mysterious and abstruse, of human Chaos into something of articulate Cosmos; witnesses the wild and strange birth-pangs of Human Society, and reflects that without something similar (little as men expect such now), no Cosmos of human society ever was got into existence, nor can ever again be.

The violences, fightings, crimes—ah yes, these seldom fail, and they are very lamentable. But always, too, among those old populations, there was one saving element; the now want of which, especially the unlamented want, transcends all lamentation. Here is one of those strange, piercing, winged-words of Ruskin, which has in it a terrible truth for us in these epochs now come:

‘My friends, the follies of modern Liberalism, many and great though they be, are practically summed in this denial or neglect of the quality and intrinsic value of things. Its rectangular beatitudes, and spherical benevolences,—theology of universal indulgence, and jurisprudence which will hang no rogues, mean, one and all of them, in the root, incapacity of discerning, or refusal to discern, worth and unworth in anything, and least of all in man; whereas Nature and Heaven command you, at your peril, to discern worth from unworth in everything, and most of all in man. Your main problem is that ancient and trite one, “Who is best man?” and the Fates forgive much,—forgive the wildest, fiercest, cruelest experiments,—if fairly made for the determination of that. Theft and bloodguiltiness are not pleas-

‘ing in their sight; yet the favouring powers of the spiritual
 ‘and material world will confirm to you your stolen goods,
 ‘and their noblest voices applaud the lifting of your spear,
 ‘and rehearse the sculpture of your shield, if only your robbing and slaying have been in fair arbitrament of that question, “Who is best man?” But if you refuse such inquiry, and maintain every man for his neighbour’s match,—if you
 ‘give vote to the simple and liberty to the vile, the powers
 ‘of those spiritual and material worlds in due time present
 ‘you inevitably with the same problem, soluble now only
 ‘wrong side upwards; and your robbing and slaying must
 ‘be done then to find out, “Who is *worst* man?” Which, in
 ‘so wide an order of merit, is, indeed, not easy; but a complete Tammany Ring, and lowest circle in the Inferno of Worst, you are sure to find, and to be governed by.’¹

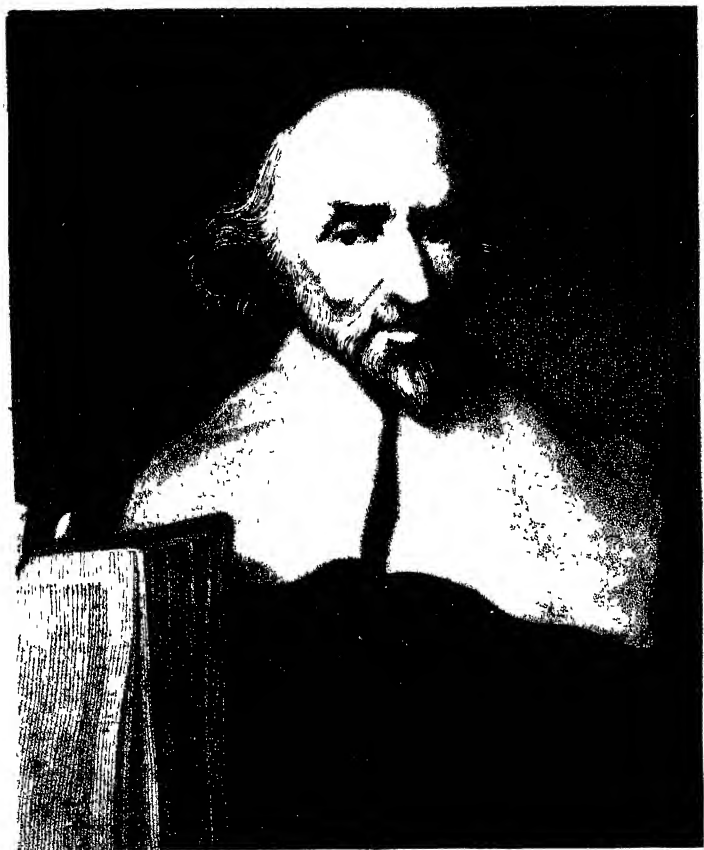
All readers will admit that there was something naturally royal in these Haarfagr Kings. A wildly great kind of kindred; counts in it two Heroes of a high, or almost highest, type: the first two Olafs, Tryggveson and the Saint. And the view of them, withal, as we chance to have it, I have often thought, how essentially Homeric it was:—indeed what is ‘Homer’ himself but the *Rhapsody* of five centuries of Greek Skalds and wandering Ballad-singers, done (*i.e.* ‘stitched together’) by somebody more musical than Snorro was? Olaf Tryggveson and Olaf Saint please me quite as well in their prosaic form; offering me the truth of them as if seen in their real lineaments by some marvellous opening (through the art of Snorro) across the black strata of the ages. Two high, almost among the highest sons of Nature, seen as they veritably were; fairly comparable or superior to god-like

¹ *Fors Clavigera*, Letter XIV. pp. 8-10.

Achilleus, goddess-wounding Diomedes, much more to the two Atreidai, Regulators of the Peoples.

I have also thought often what a Book might be made of Snorro, did there but arise a man furnished with due literary insight, and indefatigable diligence; who, faithfully acquainting himself with the topography, the monumental relics and illustrative actualities of Norway, carefully scanning the best testimonies as to place and time which that country can still give him, carefully the best collateral records and chronologies of other countries, and who, himself possessing the highest faculty of a Poet, could, abridging, arranging, elucidating, reduce Snorro to a polished Cosmic state, unweariedly purging away his much chaotic matter! A modern 'highest kind of Poet,' capable of unlimited slavish labour withal;—who, I fear, is not soon to be expected in this world, or likely to find his task in the *Heimskringla* if he did appear here.

THE PORTRAITS OF JOHN KNOX.



JOHN KNOX

THE SOMERVILLE PORTRAIT, ENGRAVED BY HOLL, 1836

THE PORTRAITS OF JOHN KNOX.



I.

THEODORE BEZA, in the beginning of the year 1580, published at Geneva a well-printed, clearly expressed, and on the whole considerate and honest little volume, in the Latin tongue, purporting to be '*Icones*, that is to say, true Portraits, of men 'illustrious in the Reformation of Religion and Restoration 'of Learning':¹ Volume of perhaps 250 pages, but in fact not numerically paged at all, which is sometimes described as 4to, but is in reality 8vo rather, though expanded by the ample margin into something of a square form. It is dedicated to King James VI. of Scotland; then a small rather watery boy hardly yet fourteen, but the chief Protestant King then extant; the first Icon of all being that of James himself. The Dedication has nothing the least of fulsome or even panegyrical; and is in fact not so much a Dedication as a longish preface, explanatory of Beza's impulse towards publishing such a book, namely, the delight he himself has in contemplating the face of any heroic friend of Letters and of true Religion; and defending himself withal, to us super-

¹ *Icones, id est Veræ Imagines, Virorum doctrinâ simul et pietate illustrium, quorum præcipue ministerio partim bonarum Literarum studia sunt restituta, partim vera Religio in variis Orbis Christiani regionibus, nostrâ patrumque memoriâ fuit instaurata: additis eorundem vitæ & operæ descriptionibus, quibus adjectæ sunt nonnullæ picturæ quas Emblemata vocant. Theodoro Bezâ Auctore. —Genevæ. Apud Joannem Laonium. M.D.LXXX.*

fluously enough, against any imputation of idolatry or image-worship, which scrupulous critics might cast upon him, since surely painting and engraving are permissible to mankind; and that, for the rest, these Icons are by no means to be introduced into God's House, but kept as private furniture in your own. The only praise he bestows on James is the indisputable one that he is head of a most Protestant nation; that he is known to have fine and most promising faculties; which may God bring to perfection, to the benefit of his own and many nations; of which there is the better hope, as he is in the mean while under the tuition of two superlative men, Dominus Georgius Buchananus, the *facile princeps* in various literary respects, and Dominus Petrus Junius (or Jonck, as it is elsewhere called, meaning 'Young'), also a man of distinguished merit.

The Royal Icon, which stands on the outside, and precedes the Dedication, is naturally the first of all: fit ornament to the vestibule of the whole work—a half-ridiculous half-pathetic protecting genius, of whom this (opposite) is the exact figure.

Some Four Score other personages follow; of personages four score, but of Icons only Thirty-eight; Beza, who clearly had a proper wish to secure true portraits, not having at his command any further supply; so that in forty-three cases there is a mere frame of a woodcut, with nothing but the name of the individual who should have filled it, given.

A certain French translator of the Book, who made his appearance next year, Simon Goulart, a French friend, fellow preacher, and distinguished co-presbyter of Beza's, of whom there will be much farther mention soon, seems to have been better supplied than Beza with engravings. He has added from his own resources Eleven new Icons; many of

them better than the average of Beza's, and of special importance some of them; for example that of Wickliffe, the deep-lying tap-root of the whole tree; to want whose portrait and have nothing but a name to offer was surely a want indeed. Goulart's Wickliffe gratifies one not a little; and



to the open-minded reader who has any turn for physiognomic inquiries is very interesting; a most substantial and effective looking man; easily conceivable as Wickliffe, though, as in my own case, one never saw a portrait of him before; a solid, broad-browed, massive-headed man; strong

nose, slightly aquiline, beard of practical length and opulent growth; evidently a thoughtful, cheerful, faithful and resolute man; to whom indeed a very great work was appointed in this world; that of inaugurating the new Reformation and new epoch in Europe, with results that have been immense, not yet completed but expanding in our own day with an astonishing, almost alarming swiftness of development. This is among the shortest of all the Icon articles or written commentaries in Beza's Work. We translate it entire, as a specimen of Beza's well-meant, but too often vague, and mostly inane performance in these enterprises; which to the most zealous reader of his own time could leave so little of distinct information, and to most readers of our own, none at all; the result little more than interjectional, a pious emotion towards Heaven and the individual mentioned; result very vague indeed.

Wickliffe.—‘Let this, England, be thy greatest honour
‘forever that thou didst produce John Wickliffe (albeit thou
‘hast since somewhat stained that honour); the first after so
‘many years that dared to declare war against the Roman
‘Harlot, who audaciously mocked the Kings of Europe, in-
‘toxicated with her strong drink. This effort was so suc-
‘cessful that ever since that Wicked One has been mortally
‘wounded by the blow which Wickliffe by the sword of the
‘Word of God dealt to her. And although for a time the
‘wound appeared to be closed, since then it has always burst
‘open again; and finally, by the grace of God, remains in-
‘curable. Nothing was wanting to thee, excellent champion,
‘except the martyr's crown; which not being able to obtain
‘in thy life, thou didst receive forty years after thy death,
‘when thy bones were burnt to powder by Antichrist; who

‘by that single act of wickedness has forever branded himself with the stamp of cruelty, and has acquired for thee a glory so much the more splendid.

‘John Wickliffe flourished in the year 1372. He died after diverse combats, in the year 1387. His bones were burnt at Oxford in the year 1410.’

No, not at Oxford, but at Lutterworth in Leicestershire, as old Fuller memorably tells us: ‘Such the spleen of the Council of Constance,’ says he, ‘they not only cursed his memory, as dying an obstinate heretic, but ordered that his bones (with this charitable caution, “if it,” the body, “may be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people,”) be taken out of the ground and thrown far off from any Christian burial. In obedience hereunto, Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, Diocesan of Lutterworth, sent his officers (vultures with a quick-sight scent at a dead carcase) to ungrave him accordingly. To Lutterworth they come, Sumner, Commissary Official, Chancellor, Proctors, Doctors, and the servants (so that the remnant of the body would not hold out a bone against so many hands), take what was left out of the grave and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into Swift, a neighbouring brook running hard by. Thus this brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow Seas, and they into the main Ocean. And thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.’²

Beza’s selection of subjects to figure in this book of Icons is by no means of fanatically exclusive, or even straitlaced character. Erasmus, a tolerably good portrait, and a mild, laudatory, gentle, and apologetic account of the man, is one

² Fuller’s *Church History*, Section ii. Book iv.

of his figures. The Printers, Etienne, Froben, for their eximious services in the cause of good letters, *bonarum literarum*; nay King Francis I. is introduced in gallant beaver and plume, with his surely very considerable failings well veiled in shadow, and hardly anything but eulogy, on the score of his beneficences to the Paris University,—and probably withal of the primitive fact that he was Beza's King. 'Sham Bishops, *pseudo-episcopi*,' 'cruel murderers of God's messengers,' 'servants of Satan,' and the like hard terms are indeed never wanting; but on the whole a gentle and quiet frame of mind is traceable in Beza throughout;—and one almost has the suspicion that, especially as his stock both of Icons and of facts is so poor, one considerable subsidiary motive to the publication may have been the Forty Emblems, '*picturæ quas Emblemata vocant*,' pretty little engravings, and sprightly Latin verse, which follow on these poor prose Icons; and testify to all the intelligent world that Beza's fine poetic vein is still flowing, and without the much-censured erotic, or other impure elements, which caused so much scandal in his younger days.

About the middle of the Book turns up a brief, vague eulogy of the Reformation in Scotland, with only two characters introduced; Patrick Hamilton, the Scottish proto-martyr, as second in the list; and, in frank disregard of the chronology, as first and leading figure, '*Johannes Cnoxus Giffordiensis Scotus*;' and to the surprise of every reader acquainted with the character of Knox, as written indelibly, and in detail, in his words and actions legible to this day, the following strange Icon; very difficult indeed to accept as a bodily physiognomy of the man you have elsewhere got an image of for yourself, by industrious study of these same.

Surely quite a surprising individual to have kindled all Scotland, within few years, almost within few months, into perhaps the noblest flame of sacred human zeal, and brave determination to believe only what it found completely be-

IOANNES CNOXVS.



lievable, and to defy the whole world and the devil at its back, in unsubduable defence of the same. Here is a gentleman seemingly of a quite eupeptic, not to say stolid and thoughtless frame of mind; much at his ease in Zion, and content to take things as they come, if only they will let

him digest his victuals, and sleep in a whole skin. Knox, you can well perceive, in all his writings and in all his way of life, was emphatically of Scottish build; eminently a national specimen; in fact what we might denominate the most Scottish of Scots, and to this day typical of all the qualities which belong nationally to the very choicest Scotsmen we have known, or had clear record of: utmost sharpness of discernment and discrimination, courage enough, and, what is still better, no particular consciousness of courage, but a readiness in all simplicity to do and dare whatsoever is commanded by the inward voice of native manhood; on the whole a beautiful and simple but complete incompatibility with whatever is false in word or conduct; inexorable contempt and detestation of what in modern speech is called *humbug*. Nothing hypocritical, foolish, or untrue can find harbour in this man; a pure, and mainly silent, tenderness of affection is in him, touches of genial humour are not wanting under his severe austerity; an occasional growl of sarcastic indignation against malfeasance, falsity, and stupidity; indeed secretly an extensive fund of that disposition, kept mainly silent, though inwardly in daily exercise; a most clear-cut, hardy, distinct, and effective man; fearing God and without any other fear. Of all this you in vain search for the smallest trace in this poor Icon of Beza's. No feature of a Scottish man traceable there, nor indeed, you would say, of any man at all; an entirely insipid, expressionless individuality, more like the wooden Figure-head of a ship than a living and working man; highly unacceptable to every physiognomic reader and knower of *Johannes Cnoxus Giffordensis Scotus*.

Under these circumstances it is not a surprise, and is almost a consolation, to find that Beza has as little know-

ledge of Knox's biography as of his natural face. Nothing here, or hardly anything but a blotch of ignorant confusion. The year of Knox's birth is unknown to Beza, the place very indistinctly known. Beza reports him to have studied with great distinction under John Major at St. Andrews; the fact being that he was one winter under Major at Glasgow, but never under Major at St. Andrews, nor ever a university student elsewhere at all; that his admired neological prelections at St. Andrews are a creature of the fancy; and in short that Beza's account of that early period is mere haze and ignorant hallucination. Having received the order of priesthood, thinks Beza, he set to lecturing in a so valiantly neological tone in Edinburgh and elsewhere that Cardinal Beaton could no longer stand it; but truculently summoned him to appear in Edinburgh on a given day, and give account of himself; whereupon Knox, evading the claws of this man-eater, secretly took himself away 'to *Hamestonum*,'—a town or city unknown to geographers, ancient or modern, but which, according to Beza, was then and there the one refuge of the pious, *unicum tunc piorum asyllum*. Towards this refuge Cardinal Beaton thereupon sent assassins (entirely imaginary), who would for certain have cut off Knox in his early spring, had not God's providence commended him to the care of 'Langudrius, a principal nobleman in Scotland,' by whom his precious life was preserved. This town of 'Hamestonum, sole refuge of the pious,' and this protective 'Langudrius, a principal nobleman,' are extremely wonderful to the reader; and only after a little study do you discover that 'Langudrius, a principal nobleman,' is simply the Laird of *Langniddry*, and that 'Hamestonum' the city of refuge is Cockburn the Laird of *Ormiston's*; both of whom had Sons in want of education; three in all, two

of Langniddry's and one of Ormiston's, who, especially the first, had been lucky enough to secure John Knox's services as tutor! The rest of the narrative is almost equally absurd, or only saved from being so by its emptiness and vagueness; and the one certain fact we come upon is that of Knox's taking leave of his congregation, and shortly afterwards ordaining in their presence his successor, chosen by them and him, followed by his death in fifteen days, dates all accurately given; on which latter point, what is curious to consider, Beza must have had exact information, not mere rumour.

From all this we might infer that Beza had never personally had the least acquaintance with Knox, never in all likelihood seen him with eyes; which latter on strict examination of the many accurate particulars to be found in the Lives of Beza, and especially in Bayle's multifarious details about him, comes to seem your legitimate conclusion. Knox's journeys to Geneva, and his two several residences, as preacher to the Church of the English Exiles there, do not coincide with Beza's contemporary likelihoods; nor does Beza seem to have been a person whom Knox would have cared to seek out. Beza was at Lausanne, teaching Greek, and not known otherwise than as a much-censured, fashionable young Frenchman and too erotic poet; nothing of theological had yet come from him,—except, while Knox was far off, the questionable Apology for Calvin's burning of Servetus, which cannot have had much charm for Knox, a man by no means fond of public burning as an argument in matters of human belief, rather the reverse by all symptoms we can trace in him. During Knox's last and most important ministration in Geneva, Beza, still officially Professor of Greek at Lausanne, was on an intricate mission from the

French Huguenots to the Protestant Princes of Germany, and did not come to settle in Geneva till Spring 1559, several months after Knox had permanently left it.

Directly after finishing his Book, Beza naturally forwarded a copy to Edinburgh, to the little patron Sovereign there; probably with no writing in it; there being such a comfortable Dedication and Frontispiece to the Book, but along with it a short letter to Buchanan, the little King's Head-Tutor, of which happily there is a copy still preserved to us, and ready translated, as follows:

'Behold, my dear Buchanan, a notable instance of double
'extravagance in a single act; affording an illustration of
'the characteristic phrenzy of poets,—provided you admit
'me to a participation of that title. I have been guilty of
'trifling with a serious subject, and have dedicated my trifles
'to a king. If with your usual politeness, and in considera-
'tion of our ancient friendship, you should undertake to ex-
'cuse both these circumstances to the King, I trust the mat-
'ter will have a fortunate issue: but if you refuse, I shall be
'disappointed in my expectations. The scope of this little
'Work, such as it is, you will learn from the preface; namely
'that the King, when he shall be aware of the high expecta-
'tions which he has excited in all the Churches, may at the
'same time, delighted with those various and excellent exam-
'ples, become more and more familiar with his duty. Of this
'Work I likewise send a copy to you, that is, owls to Athens;
'and request you to accept it as a token of my regard. My
'late Paraphrase of the Psalms, if it has reached your coun-
'try, will I hope inspire you with the design of reprinting
'your own, to the great advantage of the Church: and, be-
'lieve me, it is not so much myself as the whole Church that
'entreats you to accelerate this scheme. Farewell, excellent

‘man. May the Lord Jesus bless your hoary hairs more and ‘more, and long preserve you for our sake.—Geneva, March ‘the sixteenth, 1580.’³

What Buchanan or the King thought of this Book, especially of the two Icons, Johannes Cnoxus and the little silver Pepper-box of a King, we have not anywhere the slightest intimation. But one little fact, due to the indefatigable scrutiny and great knowledge of Mr. David Laing, seems worthy of notice. This is an excerpt from the Scottish Royal Treasurer’s accounts, of date, Junij 1581 (one of the volumes not yet printed):

‘*Itim*, To Adrianc Vaensoun, Fleming painter, for twa ‘*picturis* painted be him, and send’ (*sent*) ‘to Theodorus ‘Besa, conforme to ane precept as the samin producit upon ‘compt beris 8*l* 10*s*’ (14*s*. 2*d*. sterling).

The *Itim* and Adrianc indicate a clerk of great ignorance. In Painters’ Dictionaries there is no such name as Vaensoun; but there is a famous enough Vansomer, or even family or clan of Vansomers, natives of Antwerp; one of whom, Paulus Vansomer, is well known to have painted with great acceptance at King James’s Court in England (from 1606 to 1620). He died here in 1621; and is buried in St.-Martin’s-in-the-Fields: *Eximius pictor*. It is barely possible this ‘Fleming painter’ may have been some individual of these Vansomers; but of course the fact can never be ascertained. Much more interesting would it be to know what Theodorus Beza made of the ‘*twa picturis*’ when they reached him at Geneva; and where, if at all in *rerum naturâ*, they now are! All we can guess, if there be any possibility of conjecturing so much in the vague is, That these *twa picturis* might be portraits of

³ *Buchananæ Epistolæ*, p. 28. Translated by Dr. Irving, *Life and Writings of George Buchanan* (Edinburgh, 1807), p. 184.

His Majesty and Johannes Cnoxus by an artist of some real ability, intended as a silent protest against the Beza Pepper-box and Figure-head, in case the *Icones* ever came to a second edition; which it never did.

Unknown to his Scottish Majesty, and before the 'Adrian Vaensoun' pictures got under way, or at least before they were paid for, Monsieur Simon Goulart had got out his French translation of Beza's Book; and with sufficient emphasis contradicted one of the above two Icons, that of 'Jean Cnoxe de Gifford en Ecosse,' the alone important of the two. Goulart had come to Geneva some eight or nine years before; was at this time Beza's esteemed colleague and copresbyter, ultimately Beza's successor in the chief clerical position at Geneva; a man already distinguished in the world; 'wrote twenty-one books,' then of lively acceptance in the theological or literary world, though now fallen dim enough to mankind. Goulart's Book had the same publisher as Beza's last year,—*Apud Joannem Laonium*; and contains a kind of preface or rather *postscript*, for it is introduced at the end of the Icons, and before his translation of the Emblems, which latter, as will be seen, he takes no notice of; nor in regard to the Icons is there a word said of the eleven new woodcuts, for most part of superior quality, which Goulart had furnished to his illustrious friend; but only some apology for the straggle of French verses, which he has been at the pains to introduce in his own zealous person at the end of many of the Icons. As the piece is short, and may slightly illustrate the relations of Author and Translator, we give it here entire:

‘ *Au Lecteur.*

‘ *Du consentement de M. Theodore de Besze, j'ay traduit ce*

'livre, le plus fidèlement qu'il m'a esté possible. Au reste, après la description des personnes illustres j'ai adjousté quelques vers français à chacun, exprimant comme j'ai peu les épigrammes Latins de l'auteur là où ils se sont rencontrez, et fournissant les autres vers de ma rude invention: ce que j'ay voulu vous faire entendre, afin qu'on n'imputast à l'auteur choses qu'il eust peu agencer trop mieux sans comparaison, si le temps lui eust permis ce faire, et si son esprit eust encliné à y mettre la main.'

Goulart's treatment of his, Beza's, original is of the most conscientious exactitude; the translation everywhere correct to a comma; true everywhere to Beza's meaning, and wherever possible, giving a touch of new lucidity; he uses the same woodcuts that Beza did, *plus* only his own eleven, of which, as already said, there is no mention or hint. In one instance, and not in any other, has an evident misfortune befallen him, in the person of his printer; the printer had two woodcuts to introduce; one of Jean Diaze,—a tragic Spanish Protestant, fratricidally murdered at Neuburg in the Oberpfalz, 1546,—the other of Melchior Wolmar, an early German friend and loved intimate of Beza's, from whom Beza, at Orleans, had learned Greek: the two Icons in outline have a certain vague similarity, which had deceived the too hasty printer of Goulart, who, after inserting Beza's Icon of Diaze, again inserts *it*, instead of Wolmar. This is the one mistake or palpable oversight discoverable in Goulart's accurately conscientious labour, which everywhere else reproduces Beza as in a clear mirror. But there is one other variation, not, as it seems to us, by mere oversight of printer or pressman, but by clear intention on the part of Goulart, which is of the highest interest to our readers: the notable fact, namely, that Goulart has, of his own

head, silently altogether withdrawn the Johannes Cnoxus of Beza, and substituted for it this now adjoined Icon, one of his own eleven, which has no relation or resemblance whatever to the Beza likeness, or to any other ever known of Knox. A portrait recognisably not of Knox at all; but of

**JEAN CNOX DE GIFFORD
EN ESCOSSE**



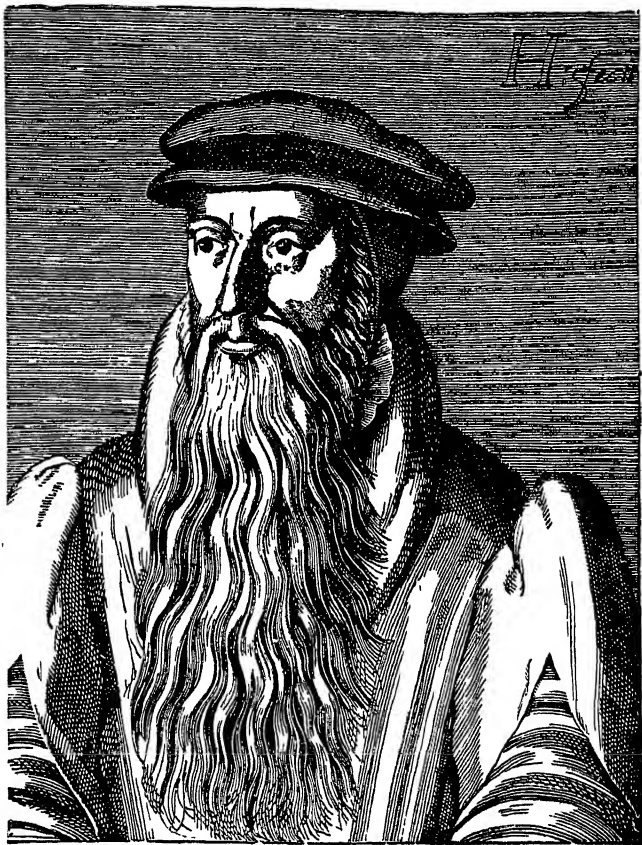
William Tyndale translator of the Bible, a fellow exile of Knox's at Geneva; which is found repeated in all manner of collections, and is now everywhere accepted as Tyndale's likeness!

This surely is a wonderful transaction on the part of conscientious, hero-worshipping Goulart towards his hero Beza;

and indeed will seem to most persons to be explicable only on the vague hypothesis that some old or middle-aged inhabitant of Geneva, who had there sometimes transiently seen Knox, twenty-one years ago (Knox had left Geneva in January 1559, and, preaching to a group of poor English exiles, probably was never very conspicuous there), had testified to Beza or to Goulart that the Beza Figure-head was by no means a likeness of Knox; which fatal information, on inquiry, had been confirmed into clear proof in the negative, and that Beza and Goulart had thereupon become convinced, and Goulart, with Beza, taking a fresh, and again unfortunate departure, had agreed that here was the real Dromio, and had silently inserted William Tyndale accordingly. This is only a vague hypothesis, for why did not the old or middle-aged inhabitant of Geneva testify with equal certainty that the Tyndale woodcut was just as little a likeness of Knox, and check Goulart and Beza in their new unfortunate adventure? But to us the conclusion, which is not hypothetical at all, must surely be that neither Beza nor Goulart had any knowledge whatever of the real physiognomy or figure of Johannes Cnoxus, and in all subsequent researches on that subject are to be considered mutually annihilative; and any testimony they could give mere zero, and of no account at all.

This, however, was by no means the result which actually followed. Twenty-two years after this of Beza (1602), a Dutch Theologian, one Verheiden, whose knowledge of theological Icons was probably much more distinct than Beza's, published at the Hague a folio entitled *Præstantium aliquot Theologorum &c. Effigies*, in which Knox figures in the following new form; done, as the signature bears, by Hondius, an Engraver of known merit, but cognisant seemingly of Beza's

Book only, and quite ignorant of Goulart's translation and its Tyndale Knox; who presents us, to our surprise, on this occasion, with the portrait given here; considerably



more alive and credible as a human being than Beza's Figure-head; and bearing on it the monogram of Hondius; so that at least its authorship is indisputable.

This, as the reader sees, represents to us a much more

effective-looking man in matters of reformation or vigorous action; in fact it has a kind of brow-beating or almost bullying aspect; a decidedly self-sufficient man, but with no trace of feature in him that physiognomically can remind us of Knox. The river of beard flowing from it is grander than that in the Figure-head, and the Book there, with its right-hand reminding you of a tied-up bundle of carrots supporting a kind of loose little volume, are both charitably withdrawn. This woodcut, it appears, pleased the late Sir David Wilkie best of all the Portraits he had seen, and was copied or imitated by him in that notable Picture of his, 'Knox preaching before Queen Mary,'—one of the most impossible pictures ever painted by a man of such indubitable genius, including therein piety, enthusiasm, and veracity,—in brief the probably intolerablest figure that exists of Knox; and from one of the noblest of Scottish painters the least expected. Such by accident was the honour done to Hondius's impossible Knox; not to our advantage, but the contrary. All artists agree at once that this of Hondius is nothing other than an improved reproduction of the old Beza Figure-head; the face is turned to the other side, but the features are preserved, so far as adding some air at least of animal life would permit; the costume, carefully including the little patch of ruffles under the jaw, is reproduced; and in brief the conclusion is that Hondius or Verheiden had no doubt but the Beza portrait, though very dead and boiled-looking, had been essentially like; and needed only a little kindling up from its boiled condition to be satisfactory to the reader. Goulart's French Translation of Beza, and the substitution of the Tyndale figure there, as we have said, seems to be unknown to Verheiden and his Hondius; indeed Verheiden's library, once furnished with a Beza, having no use for a poor

Interpretation. In fact we should rather guess the success of Goulart in foreign parts, remote from Geneva and its reading population, to have been inconsiderable; at least in Scotland and England, where no mention of it or allusion to it is made, and where the Book at this day is fallen extremely scarce in comparison with Beza's; no copy to be found in the British Museum, and dealers in old books testifying that it is of extreme rarity; and would now bring, said one experienced-looking old man, perhaps twenty guineas. Beza's boiled Figure-head appears to have been regarded as the one canonical Knox, and the legitimate function of every limner of Knox to be that of Hondius, the reproduction of the Beza Figure-head, with such improvements and invigoration as his own best judgment or happiest fancy might suggest. Of the Goulart substitution of Tyndale for Knox, there seems to have been no notice or remembrance anywhere, or if any, then only a private censure and suppression of the Goulart and his Tyndale. Meanwhile, such is the wild chaos of the history of bad prints; the whirligig of time did bring about its revenge upon poor Beza. In *Les Portraits des Hommes Illustres qui ont le plus contribué au Rétablissement des belles lettres et de la vraye Religion* (À Genève, 1673), the woodcut of Knox is contentedly given, as Goulart gave it in his French Translation; and for that of Beza himself the boiled Figure-head, which Beza denominated Knox! The little silver Pepper-box is likewise given again there as portrait of Jacobus VI.,—Jacobus who had, in the mean time, grown to full stature, and died some fifty years ago. For not in Nature, but only in some chaos thrice confounded, with Egyptian darkness superadded, is there to be found any history comparable to that of old bad prints. For example, of that disastrous old Figure-head, produced to view

by Beza, who or what did draw it, when or from what authority, if any, except that evidently some human being did, and presumably from some original or other, must remain for ever a mystery. In a large *Granger*, fifty or sixty big folios, and their thousands of prints, I have seen a summary collection, of the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, of some fourteen or fifteen Heroes of the Reformation, Knox among them; all flung down in the form of big circular blotch, like the opened eggs for an omelet, and among these fourteen or fifteen egg-yolks, hardly two of which you could determine even what they wished to resemble.

For the last century or so, by far the most famed and trusted of Scottish Knox Portraits has been that in the possession of the Torphichen family, at Calder House, some twelve or more miles from Edinburgh. This Picture was public here in the Portrait Exhibition in 1869, and a photograph or attempt at photograph was taken of it, but with little success, the colours having mostly grown so black. By the great kindness of the now Lord Torphichen, the Picture was, with prompt and conspicuous courtesy, which I shall not soon forget, sent up again for inspection here, and examination by artistic judges; and was accordingly so examined and inspected by several persons of eminence in that department; all of whom were, almost at first sight, unanimous in pronouncing it to be a picture of no artistic merit;—impossible to ascribe it to any namable painter, having no style or worth in it, as a painting; guessable to be perhaps under a century old, and very clearly an improved copy from the Beza Figure-head. Of course no photographing was attempted on our part; but along with it there had been most obligingly sent a copy of the late Mr. Penny of Calder's

engraving; a most meritorious and exact performance, of which no copy was discoverable in the London shops, though, at Mr. Graves's and elsewhere, were found one or two others of much inferior exactitude to Mr. Penny's engraving:—of this a photograph was taken, which, in the form of woodcut, is subjoined on p. 157.

This Torphichen Picture is essentially like the Beza woodcut, though there has been a strenuous attempt on the part of the hopelessly incompetent Painter to improve upon it, successful chiefly in the matter of the bunch of carrots, which is rendered almost like a human hand; for the rest its original at once declares itself, were it only by the loose book held in said hand; by the form of the nose and the twirl of ruffles under the left cheek; clearly a bad picture, done in oil, some generations ago, for which the Beza Figure-head served as model, accidentally raised to pictorial sovereignty by the *vox populi* of Scotland. On the back of the canvas, in clear, strong hand, by all appearance less than a century old, are written these words: 'Rev. Mr. John Knox. The 'first sacrament of the Supper given in Scotland after the 'Reformation, was dispensed by him in this hall.' A statement, it appears, which is clearly erroneous, if that were of much moment. The Picture as a guide to the real likeness of Knox was judged by us to offer no help whatever; but does surely testify to the Protestant zeal of some departed Lord Torphichen; and indeed it is not improbable that the conspicuous fidelity of that noble house in all its branches to Knox and his Reformation, from first to last, through all his and its perils and struggles, has been the chief cause of its singular currency in Scotland, in the later generation or two. Certain the picture is a poor and altogether commonplace reproduction of the Beza Figure-head; and has never-

theless, as I am assured by judgments better than my own, been the progenitor of all, or nearly all, the incredible Knoxes, the name of which is now legion. Nearly all, I said, not quite all, for one or two set up to be originals, not said by whom, and seem to partake more of the Hondius type; having a sullen or sulky expression superadded to the self-sufficiency and copious river of beard, bestowed by Hondius.

The so-called original Knox, still in Glasgow University, is thus described to me by a friendly Scottish artist, Mr. Robert Tait, Queen Anne Street, of good faculties and opportunities in such things, as of doubtful derivation from the Beza Icon, though engraved and recommended as such by Pinkerton, and as being an 'altogether weak and foolish head.' From the same artist I also learn that the bronze figure in the monument at Glasgow is a visible derivative from Beza, through Torphichen. And in brief this poor Figure-head has produced, and is still producing, through various venters, a quite Protean *pecus* of incredible portraits of Knox;—the latest of note, generally known, is M'Crie's frontispiece to the *Life of Knox*, and probably the most widely spread in our generation that given in Chambers's *Biographical Dictionary*. A current portrait, I suppose, of the last century, although there is no date on it, 'in the possession of Miss Knox of Edinburgh, painted by De Vos,' has some air of generic difference, but is evidently of filiality to Hondius or Torphichen withal; and as to its being painted by De Vos, there is no trace of that left visible, nor of Miss Knox, the once proprietress; not to add, that there is a whole clan of Dutch De Voses, and no Christian name for the Miss Knox one. Another picture not without impressiveness has still its original in Holyrood House; and is thought to be of some merit and of a different clan from the Torphichen; but

with a pair of compasses in the hand of it, instead of a Bible; and indeed has been discovered by Mr. Laing to be the portrait of an architect or master-builder, and to be connected



THE TORPHICHEN PORTRAIT.

merely with the ædilities, not with the theologies of Holyrood House. A much stranger 'original Picture of Knox' is still to be found in Hamilton Palace, but it represents unfor-

tunately, not the Prophet of the Reformation, but to all appearance the professional Merry Andrew of that family.—Another artist friend of great distinction, Mr. J. E. Boehm, sculptor, sums up his first set of experiences, which have since been carried to such lengths and depths, in these words, dated January 28, 1874:

‘I called to thank you for the loan of John Knox’s portrait’ (Engraving of the *Somerville*, of which there will be speech enough by and by), ‘and to beg you to do me the favour of looking at the sketches which I have modelled, and to give me your valuable opinion about them.—I have just been to the British Museum, and have seen engravings after four pictures of John Knox. The only one which looks done from Nature, and a really characteristic portrait, is that of which you have a print. It is I find from a picture “in the possession of Lord Somerville.” Two more, which are very like each other in quality, and in quantity of beard and garments, are, one in the possession of a Miss Knox of Edinburgh (painted by De Vos), the other at Calder House (Lord Torphichen’s). The fourth, which is very bad, wherein he is represented laughing like a “*Hofnarr*,” is from a painting in Hamilton Palace; but cannot possibly have been *the* John Knox, as he has a turned-up nose and looks funny.’

But enough now, and more than enough, of the soul-confusing spectacle of Proteus driving all his monstrous flock, product of chaos, to view the lofty mountains and the sane minds of men.

II.

WILL the reader consent, at this stage of our little enterprise, to a few notices or excerpts direct from Knox himself; from his own writings and actions? perhaps it may be possible from these, even on the part of outsiders and strangers to Knox, to catch some glimpses of his inward physiognomy, though all credible traces of his outward or bodily lineaments appear hitherto to have fallen impossible. Here is a small touch of mirth on the part of Knox, from whom we are accustomed to expect very opposite things. It is the report of a Sermon by one Arth, a Black or Gray Friar of the St. Andrews neighbourhood, seemingly a jocular person, though not without serious ideas: Sermon, which was a discourse on 'Cursing' (Clerical Excommunication), a thing the priests were wonderfully given to at that time, had been preached first in Dundee, and had got for poor Arth from certain jackmen of the Bishop of Brechin, instead of applause, some hustling and even cuffing, followed by menaces and threatened tribulation from the Bishop himself; till Arth got permission to deliver his sermon again in the Kirk of St. Andrews to a distinguished audience; who voted the purport and substance of it to be essentially true and justifiable. Here, at second hand, is Knox's summary of the discourse, written many years after:

'The theme' (*text*) 'of his sermon was "Veritie is the strongest of all things." His discourse of Cursing was, 'That if it were rightly used, it was the most fearful thing 'upon the face of the earth; for it was the very separation

‘of man from God; but that it should not be used rashly
‘and for every light cause, but only against open and in-
‘corrigible sinners. But now (said he) the avarice of priests
‘and the ignorance of their office, ha’s caused it altogether
‘to be vilipended; for the priest (said he) whose duty and
‘office is to pray for the people, stands up on Sunday and
‘cries, “Ane has tynt a spurtill” (*lost a porridge stick*). “There
‘is ane flail stolen from them beyond the burn.” “Thê good-
‘wife of the other side of the gate has tynt a horn spune”
(*lost a horn spoon*). “God’s maleson and mine I give to
‘them that knows of this gear and restores it not.” How
‘the people mocked their cursing, he farther told a merry
‘tale; how, after a sermon he had made at Dumfermling,
‘he came to a house where gossips were drinking their
‘Sunday’s penny, and he, being dry, asked drink. “Yes,
‘Father (said one of the gossips), ye shall have drink; but
‘ye maun first resolve ane doubt which is risen among us,
‘to wit, what servant will serve a man best on least ex-
‘penses.” “The good Angel (said I), who is man’s keeper,
‘who makes greatest service without expenses.” “Tush
‘(said the gossip), we mean no so high matters: we mean,
‘what honest man will do greatest service for least ex-
‘penses?” And while I was musing (said the Friar) what
‘that should mean, he said, “I see, Father, that the greatest
‘clerks are not the wisest men. Know ye not how the
‘Bishops and their officials serve us husbandmen? Will
‘they not give to us a letter of Cursing for a plack” (*say, farthing English*), “to last for a year, to curse all that look
‘ower our dyke? and that keeps our corn better nor the
‘sleeping boy that will have three shillings of fee, a sark,
‘and a pair of shoon” (*shirt and pair of shoes*) “in the year.
‘And therefore if their cursing dow” (*avail*) “anything, we

‘hold the Bishops best-cheap servants in that respect that
‘are within the realm.’⁴

Knox never heard this discourse himself; far away, he, from Arth and St. Andrews at that time. But he has contrived to make out of it and the circumstances surrounding, a little picture of old Scotch life, bright and real looking, as if by Teniers or Ostade.

Knox’s first concern with anything of Public History in Scotland or elsewhere, and this as yet quite private and noted only by himself, is his faithful companionship of the noble martyr Wishart, in the final days of his sore pilgrimage and battle in this world. Wishart had been driven out of Scotland, while still quite young, for his heretical proceedings; and had sought refuge in England; had gained great love for his fine character and qualities, especially during his stay, of a year or more, in Cambridge University, as one of his most ardent friends and disciples there, Emery Tylney, copiously testifies, in what is now the principal record and extant biography of Wishart,—still preserved in *Foxe’s Martyrology*.

In consequence of the encouraging prospects that had risen in Scotland, Wishart returned thither in 1546, and began preaching, at last publicly, in the streets of Dundee, with great acceptance from the better part of the population there. Perils and loud menacings from official quarters were not wanting; finally Wishart had moved to other safer places of opportunity; thence back to Dundee, where pestilence was raging; and there, on impulse of his own conscience

⁴ *The Works of John Knox*, collected and edited by David Laing (the first complete, and perfectly annotated Edition ever given: a highly meritorious, and, considering all the difficulties, intrinsic and accidental, even a heroic Performance; for which all Scotland, and in a sense all the world, is debtor to Mr. Laing); 6 vols. Edinburgh, 1846-64, i. p. 37 et seq.

only, had 'planted himself between the living and the dead,' and been to many a terrestrial help and comfort,—not to speak of a celestial. The pest abating at Dundee, he went to East Lothian; and there, with Haddington for headquarters, and some principal gentry, especially the Lairds of Langniddry and Ormiston, protecting and encouraging, and beyond all others with John Knox, tutor to these gentlemen's sons, attending him, with the liveliest appreciation and most admiring sympathy,—indeed acting, it would seem, as Captain of his Body-guard. For it is marked as a fact that the monstrous Cardinal Beaton had in this case appointed a specific assassin, a devil-serving Priest, to track Wishart diligently in these journeyings about of his, which were often nocturnal and opportune for such a thing, and, the sooner the better, do him to death; and on the one clear glimpse allowed us of Knox, it was he that carried the 'two-handed sword' provided for Wishart's safety against such chances. This assassin project against Wishart is probably the origin of Beza's notion about Beaton's intention to assassinate Knox; who was at this time far below the notice of such a high mightiness, and in all probability had never been heard of by him. Knox had been privately a most studious, thoughtful, and intelligent man for long years, but was hitherto, though now in his forty-first year, known only as tutor to the three sons of Langniddry and Ormiston ('*Langniddrius* and *Hamestonum*'); and did evidently carry the two-handed sword, on the last occasion on which it could have availed in poor Wishart's case.

Knox's account of Wishart, written down hastily twenty years after, in his *History of the Reformation*, is full of a noble, heartfelt, we might call it holy sympathy,—pious and pure in a high degree. The noble and zealous Wishart, 'at the

end of the Holy dayis of Yule,' 1546, came to Haddington, full of hope that the great tidings he was preaching would find a fervour of acceptance from the people there; but Wishart's disappointment, during the three days and nights that this visit lasted, was mournfully great. The first day the audience was considerable (what Knox calls 'reasonable'), but nothing like what had been expected, and formerly usual to Wishart in that kirk on such occasions. The second day it was worse, and the third 'so sclender, that many wondered.' The fact was that the Earl of Bothwell, the afterwards so famous and infamous, at this time High Sheriff of the County of Haddington, and already a stirring questionable gentleman of ambidexterous ways, had been busy, privately intimating from his great Cardinal, that it might be dangerous to hear Wishart and his preachings; and that prudent people would do well to stay away. The second night Wishart had lodged at Lethington, with Maitland, father of the afterwards notable Secretary Lethington (a pleasant little twinkle of interest to secular readers); and the elder Lethington, though not himself a declared Protestant, had been hospitably good and gracious to Wishart.

The third day he was again appointed to preach; but, says Knox, 'before his passing to the sermon there came to 'him a boy with ane letter from the West land,'—Ayr and the other zealous shires in that quarter, in which he had already been preaching,—'saying that the gentlemen there 'could not keep diet with him at Edinburgh, as they had 'formerly agreed' (Hope that there might have been some Bond or engagement for mutual protection on the part of these Western Gentlemen suddenly falling vain for poor Wishart). Wishart's spirits were naturally in deep depression at this news, and at such a silence of the old zeal all

round him;—all the world seeming to forsake him, and only the Cardinal's assassin tracking him with continual menace of death. He called for Knox, 'who had awaited upon him 'carefully from the time he came to Lothian; with whom 'he began to enter in purpose' (*to enter on discourse*), 'that he 'wearièd of the world; for he perceived that men began to 'weary of God.' Knox, 'wondering that he desired to keep 'any purpose before Sermon (for that was never his accustomed use before), said, "Sir, the time of Sermon approaches: I will leave you for the present to your meditation;" and so took the letter foresaid, and left him. The 'said Maister George spaced up and down behind the high 'altar more than half an hour: his very countenance and 'visage declared the grief and alteration of his mind. At 'last he passed to the pulpit, but the auditure was small. 'He should have begun to have entreated the Second Table 'of the Law; but thereof in that sermon, he spake very little, 'but began on this manner: "O Lord how long shall it be, 'that thy holy word shall be despised, and men shall not 'regard their own salvation. I have heard of thee, Haddington, that in thee would have been at ane vain Clerk 'Play" (*Mystery Play*) "two or three thousand people; and 'now to hear the messenger of the Eternal God, of all thy 'town or parish, can not be numbered a hundred persons. 'Sore and fearful shall the plagues be that shall ensue this 'thy contempt: with fire and sword thou shalt be plagued; 'yea, thou Haddington, in special, strangers shall possess 'thee, and you the present inhabitants shall either in bondage serve your enemies or else ye shall be chased from your 'own habitation, and that because ye have not known, nor 'will not know, the time of God's merciful visitation." In 'such vehemency, and threatenings continued that servant

‘of God near an hour and a half, in the which he declared ‘all the plagues that ensued, as plainly as after’ (*afterwards*) ‘our eyes saw them performed. In the end he said, “I have ‘forgotten myself and the matter that I should have entreated; but let these my last words as concerning public ‘preaching, remain in your minds, till that God send you ‘new comfort.” Thereafter he made a short paraphrase ‘upon the Second Table of the Law, with an exhortation to ‘patience, to the fear of God, and unto the works of mercy; ‘and so put end, as it were, making his last testament.”’

The same night on Wishart’s departing from Haddington, ‘he took his good-night, as it were forever of all his ‘acquaintance,’ says Knox, ‘especially from Hew Douglas ‘of Langniddry. John Knox pressing to have gone with ‘him, he said, “Nay, return to your bairnes” (*pupils*); “and ‘God bless you. One is sufficient for one sacrifice.” And ‘so he caused a twa-handed sword (which commonly was ‘carried with the said Maister George) be taken from the ‘said John Knox, who, albeit unwillingly, obeyed, and returned with Hew Douglas to Langniddry,’—never to see his face more. ‘Maister George, having to accompany him, ‘the Laird of Ormeston, John Sandilands of Caldar younger’ (*Ancestor of the now Lords Torphichen*) ‘the Laird of Brounstown and others, with their servants, passed upon foot (for ‘it was a vehement frost) to Ormeston.’

In a couple of hours after, Bothwell, with an armed party, surrounded Ormiston; got Wishart delivered to him, upon solemn pledge of his oath and of his honour that no harm should be done him; and that if the Cardinal should threaten any harm against Wishart, he, Bothwell, would with his whole strength, and of his own power, redeliver him safe in

this place. Whereupon, without battle or struggle, he was permitted to depart with Wishart; delivered him straight-way to the Cardinal,—who was expressly waiting in the neighbourhood, and at once rolled off with him to Edinburgh Castle, soon after to the Castle of St. Andrews (to the grim old *oubliette à la Louis XI.*, still visible there); and, in a month more to death by the gallows and by fire. This was one of the first still conspicuous foul deeds of Patrick Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, in this world; who in his time did so many. The memory of all this had naturally in Knox's mind a high and mournful beauty, all the rest of his life. Wishart came to St. Andrews in the end of January 1546, and was mercilessly put to death there on the first of March following.

Connected unexpectedly with the tragic end of Wishart, and in singular contrast to it, here is another excerpt, illustrating another side of Knox's mind. It describes a fight between the Crozier-bearers of Dunbar Archbishop of Glasgow and of Cardinal Beaton.

'The Cardinal was known proud; and Dunbar, Archbishop of Glasgow, was known a glorious fool; and yet 'because sometimes he was called the King's Maister' (*had been tutor to James V.*), 'he was chancellor of Scotland. The 'Cardinal comes even this same year, in the end of harvest, 'to Glasgow; upon what purpose we omit. But while they 'remain together, the one in the town, and the other in the 'Castle, question rises for bearing of their croces' (*croziers*). 'The Cardinal alledged, by reason of his Cardinalship, and 'that he was *Legatus Natus* and Primate within Scotland 'in the Kingdom of Antichrist, that he should have the pre- 'eminence, and that his croce should not only go before, 'but that also, it should only be borne wheresoever he was. 'Good Gukstoun Glaikstour' (*Gowkston Madster*) 'the fore-

'said Archbishop, lacked no reasons, as he thought, for main-
 'tenance of his glorie: He was ane Archbishop in his own
 'diocese, and in his awn Cathedral seat and Church, and
 'therefore aught to give place to no man: the power of the
 'Cardinal was but begged from Rome, and appertained but
 'to his own person, and not to his bishoprick; for it might
 'be that his successor should not be Cardinal. But *his* dig-
 'nity was annexed with his office, and did appertain to all
 'that ever should be Bishops of Glasgow. Howsoever these
 'doubts were resolved by the doctors of divinity of both the
 'Prelates, yet the decision was as ye shall hear. Coming
 'forth (or going in, all is one), at the quein-door' (*choir-door*)
 'of Glasgow Kirk begins a striving for state betwixt the
 'two croce-bearers, so that from glooming they come to
 'shouldering; from shouldering they go to buffets, and from
 'dry blows by neffis and neffelling' (*fists and fisticuffing*);
 'and then for charity's sake, they cry *Dispersit dedit pauperi-*
 '*bus*; and assay which of the croces was finest metal, which
 'staff was strongest, and which bearer could best defend his
 'maister's pre-eminence, and that there should be no superi-
 'ority in that behalf, to the ground goes both the croces.
 'And then began no little fray, but yet a merry game; for
 'rockets' (*rochets*) 'were rent, tippets were torn, crowns were
 'knapped' (*cracked*), 'and side' (*long*) 'gowns micht have been
 'seen wantonly wag from the one wall to the other.—Many
 'of them lacked beards and that was the more pity; and
 'therefore could not buckle other' (*each other*) 'by the byrse'
 (*bristles,—hair or beard*), 'as bold men would have done. But
 'fy on the jackmen that did not their duty; for had the one
 'part of them rencountered the other, then had all gone richt.
 'But the sanctuary, we suppose, saved the lives of many.
 'How merilie soever this be written, it was bitter bourding'

(*mirth*) ‘to the Cardinal and his court. It was more than ‘irregularity; yea it micht weel have been judged lease-majesty to the son of perdition, the Pape’s awn person; and yet the other in his folly, as proud as a pacock, would ‘let the Cardinal know that he was Bishop when the other ‘was but Beaton before he gat Abirbrothok’ (*Abbacy of Arbroath in 1523, twenty-two years ago, from his uncle,—uncle retaining half of the revenues*).⁶

This happened on the 4th June 1545; and seemed to have planted perpetual enmity between these two Church dignitaries; and yet, before the end of February following,—Pope’s Legate Beaton being in immediate need of Right Revd. Gowkston’s signature for the burning of martyr Wishart at St. Andrews,—these two servants of His Infernal Majesty were brought to a cordial reconciliation, and brotherhood in doing their father’s will; no less a miracle, says Knox, than ‘took place at the accusation and death of Jesus ‘Christ, when Pilate and Herod, who before were enemies, ‘were made friends by consenting of them both to Christ’s ‘condemnation; sole distinction being that Pilate and Herod ‘were brethren in the estate called Temporal, and these two, ‘of whom we now speak, were brethren (sons of the same ‘father, the Devil) in the Estate Ecclesiastical.’

It was on the 1st March 1546 that the noble and gentle Wishart met his death; in the last days of February that Archbishop Gowkston reconciled himself to co-operate with Pilate Beaton *Legatus Natus*:—three months hence that the said Pilate Beaton, amazing Hinge of the Church, was stolen in upon in his now well-nigh impregnable castle of St. Andrews, and met his stern *quietus*. “I am a priest, I am a priest: fy, fy: all is gone!” were the last words he spoke.

⁶ *Works of Knox*, i. pp. 145-7.

Knox's narrative of all this is of a most perfect historical perspicuity and business-like brevity; and omitting no particular, neither that of buxom 'Marion Ogilvy' and her peculiar services, nor that of Melvin, the final swordsman, who 'stroke him twyse or thrise through with a stog-sweard,' after his notable rebuke to Lesley and him for their unseemly choler.⁷ He carefully abstains from any hint of criticism pro or contra on the grim transaction; though one sees evidently that the inward feeling was that of deliverance from a hideous nightmare, pressing on the soul of Knox and the eternal interests of Scotland.

Knox individually had not the least concern with this affair of Beaton, nor for eight or ten months more did he personally come in contact with it at all. But ever since the capture of Wishart, the position of Knox at Langniddry had become insecure; and on rumour after rumour of peril approaching, he had been forced to wander about from one covert to another, with his three pupils; till at length their two fathers had agreed that he should go with them to the castle of St. Andrews, literally at that time the one sure refuge; siege of it by poor Arran, or the Duke of Chatelherault as he afterwards became, evidently languishing away into utter futility; and the place itself being, what the late Cardinal fancied he had made it, impregnable to any Scottish force. He arrived there with his pupils 10 April 1547; and was before long, against his will or expectation, drawn into a height of notability in public affairs, from which he never rested more while his life lasted,—two-and-twenty years of such labours and perils as no other Scottish man went through in that epoch, till death set him free.

Beaton's body was already for the last nine or ten months

⁷ *Works of Knox*, i. pp. 174-7.

lying salted in the sea-tower *oubliette*, waiting some kind of Christian burial. The 'Siege' had dwindled into plain impotency of loose blockade, and even to pretence of treaty on the Regent's part. Knox and his pupils were in safety in castle and town; and Knox tells us that 'he began to exercise them' (his pupils) 'after his accustomed manner. Besides grammar, and other humane authors, he read unto them a catechism, account whereof he caused them give publicly in the parish Kirk of St. Andrews. He read more-over unto them the Evangel of John, proceeding where he left at his departing from Langniddry, where before his residence was; and that Lecture he read in the chapel, within the castle at a certain hour. They of the place, but especially Maister Henry Balnaves and John Rough, preacher, perceiving the manner of his doctrine, began earnestly to travail with him, that he would take the preaching place upon him. But he utterly refused, alleging "That he would not ryne where God had not called him;" meaning that he would do nothing without a lawful vocation.

'Whereupon they privily among themselves advising, having with them in council Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, they concluded that they would give a charge to the said John, and that publicly by the mouth of their preacher.' Which accordingly with all solemnity was done by the said Rough, after an express sermon on the Election of Ministers, and what power lay in the call of the congregation, how small soever, upon any man discerned by them to have in him the gifts of God. John Rough 'directed his words to the said John, charging him to refuse not the holy vocation of preaching, even as he hoped to avoid God's heavy displeasure; and turning to the congregation, asked

‘them “Was not this your charge to me? and do ye not approve this vocation?” They answered “It was; and we approve it.” Whereat the said John, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behaviour, from that day till the day that he was compelled to present himself to the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart; for no man saw any sign of mirth in him, neither yet had he pleasure to accompany any man, many days together.’

In its rude simplicity this surely is a notable passage in the history of such a man, and has a high and noble meaning in it.

About two months after Knox’s being called to the ministry in this manner, a French fleet ‘with an army the like whereof was never seen in that firth before, came within sight of St. Andrews,’—likely to make short work of the Castle there! To the, no doubt, great relief of Arran and the Queen Dowager, who all this while had been much troubled by cries and complaints from the Priests and Bishops. After some days of siege,—‘the pest within the castle,’ says Knox, ‘alarming some more than the French force without,’ and none of the expected help from England arriving, the besieged, on the 31st July 1547, surrendered St. Andrews Castle: prisoners to France, high and low, but with shining promises of freedom and good treatment there, which promises, however, were not kept by the French; for on reaching Rouen, ‘the principal gentlemen, who looked for freedom, were dispersed and put in sundry prisons. ‘The rest’ (Knox among them) ‘were left in the gallies, and there miserable entreated.’

There are two luminous little incidents connected with this grim time, memorable to all. Knox describes, and, also, it is not doubted, is the hero of the scene which follows :

‘These that were in the gallies were threatened with ‘torments, if they would not give reverence to the Mass, for ‘at certain times the Mass was said in the galley, or else ‘heard upon the shore, in presence of the forsaris’ (*forçats*); ‘but they could never make the poorest of that company to ‘give reverence to that idol. Yea, when upon the Saturday ‘at night, they sang their *Salve Regina*, the whole Scottish- ‘men put on their caps, their hoods or such thing as they ‘had to cover their heads; and when, that others were ‘compelled to kiss a paynted brod’ (*board, bit of wood*) ‘which they call Nostre Dame they were not pressed after ‘once; for this was the chance. Soon after the arrival ‘at Nances’ (*Nantes*) ‘their great *Salve* was sung, and a ‘glorious painted Lady was brought in to be kissed, and ‘among others, was presented to one of the Scottishmen ‘then chained. He gently said, “Trouble me not, such ane ‘idole is accursed; and therefore I will not touch it.” The ‘Patron and the Arguesyn’ (*Argousin, Serjeant who commands the forçats*) ‘with two officers, having the chief charge of all ‘such matters, said, “Thou shalt handle it;” and so they ‘violently thrust it to his face, and put it betwixt his hands; ‘who seeing the extremity, took the idol and advisedly look- ‘ing about, cast it in the river, and said, “Let our Lady now ‘saif herself; she is licht aneuch; let her learn to swim.” ‘After that was no Scottish man urged with that idolatry.’⁸

Within year and day the French galleys,—Knox still chained in them,—reappeared in St. Andrews Bay, part of a mighty French fleet with 6000 hardy, experienced French

⁸ *Works of Knox*, i. p. 227.

soldiers, and their necessary stores and furnitures,—come with full purpose to repair the damages Protector Somerset had done by Pinkie Battle, and to pack the English well home; and, indeed, privately, to secure Scotland for themselves and their Guises, and keep it as an open French road into England thenceforth. They first tried Broughty Castle with a few shots, where the English had left a garrison, which gave them due return; but without farther result there. Knox's galley seems to have been lying not far from Broughty; Knox himself, with a notable 'Maister James Balfour' close by him; utterly foredone in body, and thought by his comrades to be dying, when the following small, but noteworthy passage occurred.

'The said Maister James and John Knox being intil one galley and being wondrous familiar with him' (*Knox*) 'would often times ask his judgment, "If he thought that ever they should be delivered?" Whose answer was ever, "fra the day that they entered in the gallayis, "That God wald deliver them from that bondage, to his glorie, even in this lyef." And lying betwixt Dundee and St. Andrews, the second time that the gallayis returned to Scotland, the said John being so extremely seak' (*sick*) 'that few hoped his life, the said Maister James willed him to look to the land, and asked if he knew it? Who answered, "Yes: I knaw it weel; for I see the stepill" (*steeple*) "of that place, where God first in public opened my mouth to his glorie, and I am fully persuaded, how weak that ever I now appear, that I shall not depart this lyeff, till that my tongue shall glorifie his godlie name in the same place." This reported the said Maister James, in presence of many famous witness, many years before that ever the said John set futt in Scotland, this last time to preache.'

Knox sat nineteen months, chained, as a galley slave in this manner ; or else, as at last for some months, locked up in the prison of Rouen ; and of all his woes, dispiritments, and intolerabilities, says no word except the above ‘ miserable entreated.’ But it seems hope shone in him in the thickest darkness, refusing to go out at all. The remembrance of which private fact was naturally precious and priceless all the rest of his life.

The actual successes of these 6000 veteran French were small compared with their expectations ; the weary siege of Haddington, where Somerset had left a garrison, not very wisely thought military critics, they had endless difficulties with, and, but for the pest among the townsfolk and garrison, were never like to have succeeded in. The fleet, however, stood gloriously out to sea ; and carried home a prize, they themselves might reckon next to inestimable,—the royal little Mary, age six, crowned five years ago Queen of Scots, and now covenanted to wed the Dauphin of France, and be brought up in that country, with immense advantage to the same. They steered northward by the Pentland Firth, then round by the Hebrides and West coast of Ireland, prosperously through the summer seas ; and by about the end of July 1548, their jewel of a child was safe in St. Germain-en-Laye : the brightest and bonniest little Maid in all the world,—setting out, alas, towards the blackest destiny !—

Most of this winter Knox sat in the prison of Rouen, busy commentating, prefacing, and trimming out a Book on Protestant Theology, by his friend Balnaves ; and anxiously expecting his release from this French slavery, which hope, by help of English Ambassadors, and otherwise, did at length, after manifold difficulties, find fulfilment.

In the spring of the next year, Knox, Balnaves of Hallhill, Kirkcaldy of Grange, and the other exiles of St. Andrews, found themselves safe in England, under the gracious protection of King Edward VI.; Knox especially under that of Archbishop Cranmer, who naturally at once discerned in him a valuable missionary of the new Evangelical Doctrine; and immediately employed him to that end.

Knox remained in England some five years; he was first appointed, doubtless at Cranmer's instigation, by the English Council, Preacher in Berwick and neighbourhood; thence, about a year after, in Newcastle. In 1551 he was made one of the Six Chaplains to Edward, who were appointed to go about all over England spreading abroad the reformed faith, which the people were then so eager to hear news of. His preaching was, by the serious part of the community, received with thankful approbation; and he had made warm friends among that class; and naturally, also, given offence to the lukewarm or half-and-half Protestants; especially to Tostall, Bishop of Durham, for his too great detestation of the Mass. To the Council, on the other hand, it is clear that he rose in value; giving always to them, when summoned on such complaints, so clear and candid an account of himself. In the third year of his abode in England, 1552, he was offered by them the Bishopric of Rochester; but declined it, and, soon after, the living of All-hallows, Bread Street, London, which also he declined. On each of these occasions he was again summoned by the King's Council to give his reasons; and again gave them,—Church in England not yet sufficiently reformed; too much of *vestments* and of other Popish fooleries remaining; bishops or pastors without the due power to correct their flock

which every pastor ought to have;—was again dismissed by the Council, without censure, to continue in his former employment, where, he said, his persuasion was that he could be more useful than preaching in London or presiding at Rochester.

Knox many times lovingly celebrates the young Protestant King, and almost venerates him, as one clearly sent of God for the benefit of these realms, and of all good men there; regarding his early death as a heavy punishment for the sins of the people. It was on the 6th July 1553 that Edward died; and in the course of that same year Knox with many other Protestants, clergy and laity, had to leave England, to avoid the too evident intentions of Bloody Mary, so soon culminating in her fires of Smithfield and marriage with Philip II. Knox seems to have lingered to the very last; his friends, he says, had to beseech him with tears, almost to force him away. He was leaving many that were dear to him, and to whom he was dear; amongst others Marjory Bowes, who (by the earnest resolution of her mother) was now betrothed to him; and his ulterior course was as dark and desolate as it could well be. From Dieppe, where he first landed on crossing the Channel, he writes much of his heartfelt grief at the dismal condition of affairs in England, truly more afflicting than that of native Scotland itself; and adds on one occasion, with a kind of sparkle of disdain, in reference to his own poor wants and troubles:

‘I will not mak you privy how rich I am, but off’ (*from*) ‘London I departit with less money than ten groats; but ‘God has since provided, and will provide, I doubt not. ‘hereafter abundantly for this life. Either the Queen’s ‘Majesty’ (*of England*) ‘or some Treasurer will be XL pounds

‘richer by me, for so meikle lack I of duty of my patents’ (*year’s salary as Royal Chaplain*). ‘But that little troubles me.’

From Dieppe, in about a month, poor Knox wandered forth, to look into the churches of Switzerland,—French Huguenots, Good Samaritans, it is like, lodging and furthering him through France. He was, for about five months, Preacher at Frankfort-on-Mayn, to a Church of English exiles there; from which, by the violence of certain intrusive High-Church parties, as we may style them, met by a great and unexpected patience on the part of Knox, he felt constrained to depart,—followed by the less ritual portion of his auditory. He reached Geneva (April 1555); and, by aid of Calvin and the general willing mind of the city magistrates, there was a spacious (quondam Papist) Church conceded him; where for about three years, not continuous, but twice or oftener interrupted by journeys to Dieppe, and, almost one whole year, by a visit to Scotland, he, loyally aided by one Goodman, an English colleague or assistant, preached and administered to his pious and otherwise forlorn Exiles, greatly to their comfort, as is still evident. In Scotland (November 1555—July 1556) he laboured incessantly, kindling the general Protestant mind into new zeal and new clearness of resolve for action, when the time should come. He had many private conferences in Edinburgh; much preaching, publicly in various towns, oftener privately, in well-affected mansions of the aristocracy; and saw plainly the incipient filaments of what by and by became so famous and so all-important, as the National ‘Covenant’ and its ‘Lords of the Congregation.’ His Marjory Bowes, in the meanwhile, he had wedded. Marjory’s pious mother and self were to be with him hence-

forth,—over seas at Geneva, first of all. For summons, in an earnest and even solemn tone, coming to him from his congregation there, he at once prepared to return; quitted Scotland, he and his; leaving promise with his future Lords of the Congregation, that on the instant of signal from them he would reappear there.

In 1557, the Scotch Protestant Lords did give sign; upon which Knox, with sorrowing but hopeful heart, took leave of his congregation at Geneva; but was met, at Dieppe, by contrary message from Scotland, to his sore grief and disappointment. As Mr. Laing calculates, he occupied his forced leisure there by writing his widely offensive *First Blast against the monstrous Regiment of Women*,—of which strange book a word farther presently. Having blown this wild First Blast, and still getting negatory answers out of Scotland, he returned to Geneva and his own poor church there; and did not till January 1559, on brighter Scotch tidings coming, quit that city,—straight for Scotland this time, the tug of war now actually come. For the quarrel only a few days after Knox's arrival blazed out into open conflagration, at St. Johnston's (*hodie* Perth), with the open fall of Dagon and his temples there; and no peace was possible henceforth till either Mary of Guise and her Papist soldieries left Scotland or Christ's Congregation and their cause did. In about two years or less, after manifold vicissitudes, it turned out that it was not Knox and his cause, but Queen Regent Mary and hers that had to go. After this Knox had at least no more wanderings and journeyings abroad 'in sore trouble of heart, whither God knoweth;' though for the twelve years that remained there was at home abundant labour and trouble, till death in 1572 delivered him.

With regard to his *First Blast against the monstrous Regiment of Women* (to which there never was any Second, though that and even a Third were confidently purposed by its author), it may certainly be called the least 'successful' of all Knox's writings. Offence, and that only, was what it gave to his silent friends, much more to his loudly condemnatory enemies, on its first appearance; and often enough afterwards it re-emerged upon him as a serious obstacle in his affairs,—witness Queen Elizabeth, mainstay of the Scottish Reformation itself, who never could forgive him for that *Blast*. And now, beyond all other writings of Knox, it is fallen obsolete both in manner and in purport, to every modern mind. Unfortunately, too, for any literary reputation Knox may have in this end of the Island, it is written not in the Scottish, but in the common English dialect; completely intelligible therefore to everybody: read by many in that time; and still likeliest to be the book any English critic of Knox will have looked into, as his chief original document about the man. It is written with very great vehemency; the excuse for which, so far as it may really need excuse, is to be found in the fact that it was written while the fires of Smithfield were still blazing, on thehest of Bloody Mary, and not long after Mary of Guise had been raised to the Regency of Scotland: maleficent Crowned Women these two, covering poor England and poor Scotland with mere ruin and horror, in Knox's judgment,—and may we not still say to a considerable extent in that of all candid persons since? The Book is by no means without merit; has in it various little traits, unconsciously autobiographic and other, which are illuminative and interesting. One ought to add withal that Knox was no despiser of women; far the reverse in fact; his behaviour to good and

pious women is full of respect, and his tenderness, his patient helpfulness in their sufferings and infirmities (see the Letters to his mother-in-law and others) are beautifully conspicuous: For the rest, his poor Book testifies to many high intellectual qualities in Knox, and especially to far more of learning than has ever been ascribed to him, or is anywhere traceable in his other writings. He proves his doctrine by extensive and various reference,—to Aristotle, Justin, the Pandects, the Digest, Tertullian, Ambrose, Augustin, Chrysostom, Basil: there, and nowhere else in his books, have we direct proof how studiously and profitably his early years, up to the age of forty, must have been spent. A man of much varied, diligent, and solid reading and inquiry, as we find him here; a man of serious and continual meditation we might already have known him to be. By his sterling veracity, not of word only, but of mind and of character, by his sharpness of intellectual discernment, his power of expression, and above all by his depth of conviction and honest burning zeal, one first clearly judges what a preacher to the then earnest populations in Scotland and England, thirsting for right knowledge, this Knox must have been.

It may surprise many a reader, if we designate John Knox as a ‘Man of Genius:’ and truly it was not with what we call ‘Literature,’ and its harmonies and symmetries, addressed to man’s Imagination, that Knox was ever for an hour concerned; but with practical truths alone, addressed to man’s inmost Belief, with immutable Facts, accepted by him, if he is of loyal heart, as the daily voices of the Eternal,—even such in all degrees of them. It is, therefore, a still higher title than ‘Man of Genius’ that will belong to Knox; that of a heaven-inspired seer and heroic leader of men. But by whatever name we call it, Knox’s spiritual en-

dowment is of the most distinguished class; intrinsically capable of whatever is noblest in literature and in far higher things. His Books, especially his *History of the Reformation*, if well read, which unfortunately is not possible for every one, and has grave preliminary difficulties for even a Scottish reader, still more for an English one, testify in parts of them to the finest qualities that belong to a human intellect; still more evidently to those of the moral, emotional, or sympathetic sort, or that concern the religious side of man's soul. It is really a loss to English and even to universal literature that Knox's hasty and strangely interesting, impressive, and peculiar Book, called the *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, has not been rendered far more extensively legible to serious mankind at large than is hitherto the case.

There is in it, when you do get mastery of the chaotic details and adherences, perpetually distracting your attention from the main current of the Work, and are able to read that, and leave the mountains of annotation victoriously cut off, a really singular degree of clearness, sharp just insight and perspicacity, now and then of picturesqueness and visuality, as if the thing were set before your eyes; and everywhere a feeling of the most perfect credibility and veracity: that is to say altogether, of Knox's high qualities as an observer and narrator. His account of every event he was present in is that of a well-discerning eye-witness. Things he did not himself see, but had reasonable cause and abundant means to inquire into,—battles even and sieges are described with something of a Homeric vigour and simplicity. This man, you can discern, has seized the essential elements of the phenomenon, and done a right portrait of it; a man with an actually seeing eye. The battle of Pinkie,

for instance, nowhere do you gain, in few words or in many, a clearer view of it: the battle of Carberry Hill, not properly a fight, but a whole day's waiting under mutual menace to fight, which winds up the controversy of poor Mary with her Scottish subjects, and cuts off her ruffian monster of a Bothwell, and all the monstrosities cleaving to him, forever from her eyes, is given with a like impressive perspicuity.

The affair of Cupar Muir, which also is not a battle, but a more or less unexpected meeting on the ground for mortal duel,—especially unexpected on the Queen Regent and her Frenchmen's part,—remains memorable, as a thing one had seen, to every reader of Knox. Not itself a fight, but the prologue or foreshadow of all the fighting that followed. The Queen Regent and her Frenchmen had marched in triumphant humour out of Falkland, with their artillery ahead, soon after midnight, trusting to find at St. Andrews the two chief Lords of the Congregation, the Earl of Argyle and Lord James (afterwards Regent Murray), with scarcely a hundred men about them,—found suddenly that the hundred men, by good industry over-night, had risen to an army; and that the Congregation itself, under these two Lords, was here, as if by *tryst*, at mid-distance; skilfully posted, and ready for battle either in the way of cannon or of spear. Sudden halt of the triumphant Falklanders in consequence; and after that, a multifarious manœuvring, circling, and wheeling, now in clear light, now hidden in clouds of mist; Scots standing steadfast on their ground, and answering message-trumpets in an inflexible manner, till, after many hours, the thing had to end in an 'appointment,' truce, or offer of peace, and a retreat to Falkland of the Queen Regent and her Frenchmen, as from an enterprise unexpectedly impossible. All this is, with luminous

distinctness and business-like simplicity and brevity, set forth by Knox; who hardly names himself at all; and whose personal conduct in the affair far excels in merit all possible merit of description of it; this being probably to Knox the most agitating and perilous of all the days of his life. The day was Monday, 11 June 1559; yesterday, Sunday 10th, at St. Andrews, whither Knox had hastened on summons, he preached publicly in the Kirk there, mindful of his prophecy from the French galleys, fifteen years ago, and regardless of the truculent Hamilton, Archbishop and still official ruler of the place; who had informed him the night before that if he should presume to try such a thing, he (the truculent Archbishop) would have him saluted with 'twelve culverings, the most part of which would land upon his nose.' The fruit of which sermon had been the sudden flight to Falkland over-night of Right Reverend Hamilton (who is here again, much astonished, on Cupar Muir this day), and the open declaration and arming of St. Andrews town in favour of Knox and his cause.

The Queen Regent, as was her wont, only half kept her pacific treaty. Herself and her Frenchmen did, indeed, retire wholly to the south side of the Forth; quitting Fife altogether; but of all other points there was a perfect neglect. Her garrison refused to quit Perth, as per bargain, and needed a blast or two of siege-artillery, and danger of speedy death, before they would withdraw; and a shrewd suspicion had risen that she would seize Stirling again, and keep the way open to return. This last concern was of prime importance; and all the more pressing as the forces of the Congregation had nearly all returned home. On this Stirling affair there is a small anecdote, not yet entirely forgotten; which rudely symbolises the spirit of the population

at that epoch, and is worth giving. *The Ribbands of St. Johnston* is or was its popular title. Knox makes no mention of it; but we quote from *The Muse's Threnodie*, or rather from the Annotations to that poor doggrel; which are by James Cant, and of known authenticity.

The Earl of Argyle and the Lord James, who had private intelligence on this matter, and were deeply interested in it, but without force of their own, contrived to engage three hundred staunch townsmen of Perth to march with them to Stirling on a given night, and do the affair by stroke of hand. The three hundred ranked themselves accordingly on the appointed night (one of the last of June 1559); and so fierce was their humour, they had each, instead of the scarf or ribband which soldiers then wore round their neck, tied an effective measure of rope, mutely intimating, "If I flinch or falter, let me straightway die the death of a dog." They were three hundred these staunch Townsmen when they marched out of Perth; but the country gathered to them from right and from left, all through the meek twilight of the summer night; and on reaching Stirling they were five thousand strong. The gates of Stirling were flung wide open, then strictly barricaded; and the French marching thitherward out of Edinburgh, had to wheel right about, faster than they came; and in fact retreat swiftly to Dunbar; and there wait reinforcement from beyond seas. This of the three hundred Perth townsmen and their ropes was noised of with due plaudits; and, in calmer times, a rather heavy-footed joke arose upon it, and became current; and men would say of such and such a scoundrel worthy of the gallows, that he deserved a St. Johnston's ribband. About a hundred years ago, James Cant used to see, in the Town-clerk's office at Perth, an old Picture of the March of these

three hundred with the ropes about their necks; whether there still I have no account; but rather guess the negative.⁹

The siege of Leith, which followed hereupon, in all its details,—especially the preface to it, that sudden invasion of the Queen Regent and her Frenchmen from Dunbar, forcing Knox and his Covenanted Lords to take refuge in the ‘Quarrel Holes’ (*quarry holes*), on the Eastern flank of the Calton Hill, with Salisbury Crags overhanging it, what he elsewhere calls ‘the Craigs of Edinburgh,’ as their one defensible post against their French enemies: this scene, which lasted two nights and two days, till once the French struck into Leith, and began fortifying, dwells deeply impressed on Knox’s memory and feelings.

Besides this perfect clearness, naïveté, and almost unintentional picturesqueness, there are to be found in Knox’s swift-flowing History many other kinds of ‘geniality,’ and indeed of far higher excellences than are wont to be included under that designation. The grand Italian Dante is not more in earnest about this inscrutable Immensity than Knox is. There is in Knox throughout the spirit of an old Hebrew Prophet, such as may have been in Moses in the Desert at sight of the Burning Bush; spirit almost altogether unique among modern men, and along with all this, in singular neighbourhood to it, a sympathy, a veiled tenderness of heart, veiled, but deep and of piercing vehemence, and withal even an inward gaiety of soul, alive to the ridicule that dwells in whatever is ridiculous, in fact a fine vein of humour, which is wanting in Dante.

The interviews of Knox with the Queen are what one

⁹ *The Muse’s Threnodie*, by Mr. H. Adamson (first printed in 1638), edited, with annotations, by James Cant (Perth, 1774), pp. 126-7.

would most like to produce to readers; but unfortunately they are of a tone which, explain as we might, not one reader in a thousand could be made to sympathise with or do justice to in behalf of Knox. The treatment which that young, beautiful, and high Chief Personage in Scotland receives from the rigorous Knox would, to most modern men, seem irreverent, cruel, almost barbarous. Here more than elsewhere Knox proves himself,—here more than anywhere bound to do it,—the Hebrew Prophet in complete perfection; refuses to soften any expression or to call anything by its milder name, or in short for one moment to forget that the Eternal God and His Word are great, and that all else is little, or is nothing; nay if it set itself against the Most High and His Word, is the one frightful thing that this world exhibits.

He is never in the least ill-tempered with Her Majesty; but she cannot move him from that fixed centre of all his thoughts and actions: Do the will of God, and tremble at nothing; do against the will of God, and know that, in the Immensity and the Eternity around you, there is nothing but matter of terror. Nothing can move Knox here or elsewhere from that standing-ground; no consideration of Queen's sceptres and armies and authorities of men is of any efficacy or dignity whatever in comparison; and becomes not beautiful but horrible, when it sets itself against the Most High.

One Mass in Scotland, he more than once intimates, is more terrible to him than all the military power of France, or, as he expresses it, the landing of ten thousand armed men in any part of this realm, would be. The Mass is a daring and unspeakably frightful pretence to worship God by methods not of God's appointing; open idolatry it is, in

Knox's judgment; a mere invitation and invocation to the wrath of God to fall upon and crush you. To a common, or even to the most gifted and tolerant reader, in these modern careless days, it is almost altogether impossible to sympathise with Knox's horror, terror, and detestation of the poor old Hocuspocus (*Hoc est Corpus*) of a Mass; but to every candid reader it is evident that Knox was under no mistake about it, on his own ground, and that this is verily his authentic and continual feeling on the matter.

There are four or five dialogues of Knox with the Queen, —sometimes in her own Palace at her own request; sometimes by summons of her Council; but in all these she is sure to come off not with victory, but the reverse: and Knox to retire unmoved from any point of interest to him. She will not come to public sermon, under any Protestant (that is, for her, Heretical) Preacher. Knox, whom she invites once or oftener to come privately to where she is, and remonstrate with her, if he find her offend in anything, cannot consent to run into back-stairs of Courts, cannot find that he is at liberty to pay visits in that direction, or to consort with Princes at all. Mary often enough bursts into tears, oftener than once into passionate long-continued fits of weeping,—Knox standing with mild and pitying visage, but without the least hairsbreadth of recanting or recoiling; waiting till the fit pass, and then with all softness, but with all inexorability, taking up his theme again. The high and graceful young Queen, we can well see, had not met, nor did meet, in this world with such a man.

The hardest-hearted reader cannot but be affected with some pity, or think with other than softened feelings of this ill-starred, young, beautiful, graceful, and highly gifted human creature, planted down into so unmanageable an

environment. So beautiful a being, so full of youth, of native grace and gift; meaning of herself no harm to Scotland or to anybody; joyfully going her Progresses through her dominions; fond of hawking, hunting, music, literary study;¹⁰ cheerfully accepting every gift that out-door life, even in Scotland, can offer to its right joyous-minded and ethereal young Queen. With irresistible sympathy one is tempted to pity this poor Sister-soul, involved in such a chaos of contradictions; and hurried down to tragical destruction by them. No Clytemnestra or Medea, when one thinks of that last scene in Fotheringay, is more essentially a theme of tragedy. The tendency of all is to ask, "What peculiar harm did she ever mean to Scotland, or to any Scottish man not already her enemy?" The answer to which is, "Alas, she meant no harm to Scotland; was perhaps loyally wishing the reverse; but was she not with her whole industry doing, or endeavouring to do, the sum-total of all harm whatsoever that was possible for Scotland, namely the covering it up in Papist darkness, as in an accursed winding-sheet of spiritual death eternal?"—That, alas, is the dismally true account of what she tended to, during her whole life in Scotland or in England; and there, with as deep a tragic feeling as belongs to Clytemnestra, Medea, or any other, we must leave her condemned.

The story of this great epoch is nowhere to be found so impressively narrated as in this Book of Knox's; a hasty loose production, but grounded on the completest knowledge, and with visible intention of setting down faithfully both the imperfections of poor fallible men, and the unspeak-

¹⁰ 'The Queen readeth daily after her dinner, instructed by a learned man, Mr. George Bowhanan, somewhat of Livy.'—Randolph to Cecil, April 7, 1562 (cited in Irving's *Life of Buchanan*, p. 114).

able mercies of God to this poor realm of Scotland. And truly the struggle in itself was great, nearly unique in that section of European History; and at this day stands much in need of being far better known than it has much chance of being to the present generation. I suppose there is not now in the whole world a nobility and population that would rise, for any imaginable reason, into such a simple nobleness of resolution to do battle for the highest cause against the powers that be, as those Scottish nobles and their followers at that time did. Robertson's account, in spite of its clearness, smooth regularity, and complete intelligibility down to the bottom of its own shallow depths, is totally dark as to the deeper and interior meaning of this great movement; cold as ice to all that is highest in the meaning of this phenomenon; which has proved the parent of endless blessing to Scotland and to all Scotsmen. Robertson's fine gifts have proved of no avail; his sympathy with his subject being almost *null*, and his aim mainly to be what is called impartial, that is, to give no pain to any prejudice, and to be intelligible on a first perusal.

Scottish Puritanism, well considered, seems to me distinctly the noblest and completest form that the grand Sixteenth Century Reformation anywhere assumed. We may say also that it has been by far the most widely fruitful form; for in the next century it had produced English Cromwellian Puritanism, with open Bible in one hand, drawn Sword in the other, and victorious foot trampling on Romish Babylon, that is to say irrevocably refusing to believe what is not a Fact in God's Universe, but a mingled mass of self-delusions and mendacities in the region of Chimera. So that now we look for the effects of it not in Scotland only, or in our small British Islands only, but over wide seas, huge

American continents and growing British Nations in every zone of the earth. And, in brief, shall have to admit that John Knox, the authentic Prometheus of all that, has been a most distinguished Son of Adam, and had probably a physiognomy worth looking at. We have still one Portrait of him to produce, the *Somerville Portrait* so-named, widely different from the Beza Icon and its progeny ; and will therewith close.

III.

IN 1836 the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, or the late Charles Knight in the name of that, published an engraving of a Portrait which had not before been heard of among the readers of Knox, and which gave a new and greatly more credible account of Knox's face and outward appearance. This is what has since been called the Somerville Portrait of Knox; of which Engraving a fac-simile is here laid before the reader. In 1849 the same Engraving was a second time published, in Knight's Pictorial History of England. It was out of this latter that I first obtained sight of it; and as soon as possible, had another copy of the Engraving framed and hung up beside me; believing that Mr. Knight, or the Society he published for, had made the due inquiries from the Somerville family, and found the answers satisfactory; I myself nothing doubting to accept it as the veritable Portrait of Knox. Copies of this Engraving are often found in portfolios, but seldom hung upon the walls of a study; and I doubt if it has ever had much circulation, especially among the more serious readers of Knox. For my own share, I had unhesitatingly believed in it; and knew not that anybody called it in question, till two or three years ago, in the immense uproar which arose in Scotland on the subject of a monument to Knox, and the utter collapse it ended in,—evidently enough not for want of money, to the

unlimited amount of millions, but of any plan that could be agreed on with the slightest chance of feasibility. This raised an inquiry as to the outward appearance of Knox, and especially as to this Somerville Likeness, which I believed, and cannot but still believe, to be the only probable likeness of him, anywhere known to exist. Its history, what can be recovered of it, is as follows.

On the death of the last Baron Somerville, some three or four years ago, the Somerville Peerage, after four centuries of duration, became extinct; and this Picture then passed into the possession of one of the representatives of the family, the Hon. Mrs. Ralph Smyth of Gaybrook, near Mullingar, Ireland. This lady was a stranger to me; but on being applied to, kindly had a list of questions with reference to the Knox Portrait, which were drawn up by an artist friend, and sent to her, minutely answered; and afterwards, with a courtesy and graceful kindness, ever since pleasant to think of, offered on her coming to London to bring the Picture itself hither. All which accordingly took effect; and in sum, the Picture was intrusted altogether to the keeping of these inquirers, and stood for above three months patent to every kind of examination,—until it was, by direction of its lady owner, removed to the Loan Gallery of the South Kensington Museum, where it remained for above a year. And in effect it was inspected, in some cases with the greatest minuteness, by the most distinguished Artists and judges of art that could be found in London. On certain points they were all agreed; as, for instance, that it was a portrait in all probability like the man intended to be represented; that it was a roughly executed work; probably a copy; certainly not of earlier, most likely of later date, than Godfrey Kneller's time; that the head represented must have belonged

to a person of distinguished talent, character, and qualities. For the rest, several of these gentlemen objected to the costume as belonging to the Puritan rather than to Knox's time; concerning which preliminary objection more anon, and again more.

Mr. Robert Tait, a well-known Artist, of whom we have already spoken, and who has taken great pains in this matter, says:

‘The Engraving from the Somerville Portrait is an unusually correct and successful representation of it, yet it conveys a higher impression than the picture itself does; the features, especially the eyes and nose, are finer in form, and more firmly defined in the engraving than in the picture, while the bricky colour in the face of the latter and a somewhat glistening appearance in the skin give rather a sensual character to the head. These defects or peculiarities in the colour and surface are, however, probably due to repainting; the Picture must have been a good deal retouched, when it was lined, some thirty or forty years ago; and signs are not wanting of even earlier manipulation. . . . Some persons have said that the dress, especially the falling band, belongs to a later age than that of Knox, and is sufficient to invalidate the Portrait; but such is not the case, for white collars or bands, of various shapes and sizes, were in use in Knox's time, and are found in the portraits, and frequently referred to, in the literature of Elizabeth's reign.’

The remark of Mr. Tait in reference to the somewhat unpleasant ‘surface’ of the Somerville Picture is clearly illustrated by looking at an excellent copy of it, painted a few months ago by Mr. Samuel Laurence, in which, although the likeness is accurately preserved, the head has on account of

the less oily 'surface' of the picture a much more refined appearance.¹¹

At the top of the folio Book, which Knox holds with his right-hand fingers, there are in the Picture, though omitted in the Engraving, certain letters, two or three of them distinct, the others broken, scratchy, and altogether illegible. Out of these, various attempts were made by several of us to decipher some precise inscription; but in all the languages we had, nothing could be done in that way, till at length, what might have happened earlier, the natural idea suggested itself that in all likelihood the folio volume was the Geneva Bible; and that the half-obliterated letters were probably the heading of the page. Examination at the British Museum was at once made; of which, from a faithful inspector, this is the report: 'There are three folio editions, 'printed in Roman type, of the Geneva Bible, 1560, '62, '70. 'The volume represented in the Picture, which also is in 'Roman, not in Black Letter, fairly resembles in a rough way 'the folio of 1562. Each page has two columns for the 'text, and a narrow stripe of commentary, or what is now 'called margin, in very small type along the edges, which is 'more copious and continuous than in the original, but other- 'wise sufficiently indicates itself. Headings at the top of the 'pages in larger type than that of the text. Each verse is

¹¹ Since this was first printed, Mr. Laurence himself favours me with the following remarks, which seem too good to be lost: . . . 'I wish the reason for 'my copying the Somerville Picture had been given, viz. its being in a state of 'dilapidation and probable decay. Entirely agreeing with your own impressions 'as to its representing the individuality and character of the man, I undertook 'to make a copy that should, beside keeping the character, represent the con- 'dition of this Picture in its undamaged state. It is now not only "much 'cracked," but the *half-tints* are taken off, by some bad cleaner; the gradations 'between the highest lights and the deepest shades wanting; hence the un- 'pleasant look. I think it more than a matter of "surface." The very ground, 'a "bricky" red one, exposed, here and there; the effect of which upon the 'colours may be likened to a tune played upon a pianoforte that has missing 'keys . . . —SAMUEL LAURENCE (6 Wells Street, Oxford Street, March 30, 1875).'

‘separate, and the gaps at the ends of many of them are very like those seen in the Picture.’

I was informed by Mrs. Ralph Smyth that she knew nothing more of the Picture than that it had, as long as she could remember, always hung on the walls of the Somerville town-house in Hill Street, Mayfair,—but this Lady being still young in years, her recollection does not carry us far back. One other light point in her memory was, a tradition in the family that it was brought into their possession by James, the thirteenth Baron Somerville; but all the Papers connected with the family having been destroyed some years ago by fire, in a solicitor’s office in London, there was no means either of verifying or contradicting that tradition.

Of this James, thirteenth Lord Somerville, there is the following pleasant and suggestive notice by Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson*:

‘The late Lord Somerville, who saw much both of great and brilliant life, told me, that he had dined in company with Pope, and that after dinner the “little man,” as he called him, drank his bottle of Burgundy, and was exceedingly gay and entertaining.’

And as a footnote Boswell adds:

‘Let me here express my grateful remembrance of Lord Somerville’s kindness to me, at a very early period. He was the first person of high rank that took particular notice of me in the way most flattering to a young man, fondly ambitious of being distinguished for his literary talents; and by the honour of his encouragement made me think well of myself, and aspire to deserve it better. He had a happy art of communicating his varied knowledge of the world, in short remarks and anecdotes, with a quiet pleasant gravity, that was exceedingly engaging. Never shall

‘I forget the hours which I enjoyed with him at his apartments in the Royal Palace of Holyrood House, and at his seat near Edinburgh, which he himself had formed with an elegant taste.’¹²

The vague guess is that this James, thirteenth Baron Somerville, had somewhere fallen in with an excellent Portrait of Knox, seemingly by some distinguished Artist of Knox’s time; and had had a copy of it painted,—presumably for his mansion of Drum, near Edinburgh, long years perhaps before it came to Mayfair.

Among scrutinisers here, it was early recollected that there hung in the Royal Society’s rooms an excellent Portrait of Buchanan, undisputedly painted by Francis Porbus; that Knox and Buchanan were children of the same year (1505), and that both the Portrait of Buchanan and that of Knox indicated for the sitter an age of about sixty or more. So that one preliminary doubt, Was there in Scotland, about 1565, an artist capable of such a Portrait as this of Knox? was completely abolished; and the natural inquiry arose, Can any traces of affinity between these two be discovered?

The eminent Sculptor, Mr. J. E. Boehm, whose judgment of painting and knowledge of the history, styles and epochs of it, seemed to my poor laic mind far beyond that of any other I had communed with, directly visited, along with me, the Royal Society’s collection; found in this Buchanan perceptible traces of kinship with the Knox Portrait; and visited thereupon, and examined, with great minuteness, whatever Porbuses we could hear of in London, or neighbourhood. And always, as was evident to me, with growing clearness of conviction that this Portrait of Knox

¹² Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*, Fitzgerald’s edit. (Lond. 1874), ii. p. 434.

was a coarse and rapid, but effective, probably somewhat enlarged, copy after Porbus, done to all appearance in the above-named Baron Somerville's time; that is, before 1766. Mr. Boehm, with every new Porbus, became more interested in this research; and regretted with me that so few Porbuses were attainable here, and of these, several not by our Buchanan Porbus, François Porbus, or Pourbus, called in our dictionaries, *le vieux*, but by his son and by his father. Last Autumn Mr. Boehm was rusticating in the Netherlands. There he saw and examined many Porbuses, and the following is the account which he gives of his researches there:

‘I will try, as best I can, to enumerate the reasons why I think that the Somerville Picture is a copy, and why a copy after Francis Porbus.

‘That it is a copy done in the latter half of the last century can be easily seen by the manner of painting, and by the mediums used, which produced a certain circular cracking throughout the picture, peculiar only to the paintings of that period. Its being a *little* over the size of nature suggests that it was done after a smaller picture, as it is not probable that, had it been done from life, or from a life-sized head, the artist would have got into those proportions; and most of the portraits by Porbus (as also by Holbein, Albrecht Dürer, the contemporary and previous masters) are a little under life-size, as the sitter would appear to the painter at a certain distance.

‘The Somerville Picture at first reminded me more of Porbus than of any other painter of that time, although I did not then know whether Porbus had ever been in England, as, judging by the fact that he painted Knox's contemporary George Buchanan, we may now fairly suppose was the case. Last Autumn at Bruges, Ghent, Brussels,

‘and Antwerp, I carefully examined no less than forty portraits by Francis Porbus, *le vieux*. There are two pictures at Bruges in each of which are sixteen portrait heads, carefully painted and well preserved, somewhat smaller than that of Buchanan; and I can most vividly figure to myself that the original after which the said copy was painted must have been like that and not otherwise; indeed if I had found the original in a corner of one of the galleries, my astonishment would have been as small as my pleasure in apprising you of the find would have been great. In some of these forty portraits the costumes, including the large white collar, which has been objected to, are very similar to John Knox’s; and in the whole of them there are traces in drawing, arrangement of light and shadow, conception of character, and all those qualities which can never quite be drowned in a reproduction, and which are, it seems to me, clearly discerned in this copy, done by a free and swift hand, careful only to reproduce the likeness and general effect, and heedless of the delicate and refined touch of the great master.—J. E. BOEHM.’

From the well-known and highly estimated Mr. Merritt of the National Gallery,—who had not heard of the Picture at all, nor of these multifarious researches, but who on being applied to by a common friend (for I have never had the pleasure of personally knowing Mr. Merritt) kindly consented to go to the South Kensington Museum, and examine the Picture,—I receive, naturally with pleasure and surprise, the following report:

‘54 DEVONSHIRE STREET, PORTLAND PLACE, W.

‘9 January 1875.

‘After a careful inspection of the Portrait, I am bound to say that the signs of age are absent from the surface,

‘and I should therefore conjecture that it is a copy of a portrait of the time of Francis Pourbus, to whom we are indebted for the portrait of George Buchanan, which I believe is in the possession of the Royal Society.

‘My opinion is in favour of the Somerville Portrait being of Knox. Strongly marked features like those were not likely to be confounded with any other man’s. The world has a way of handing down the lineaments of great men. Records and tradition, as experience has shown me, do their work in this respect very effectively.—HENRY MERITT.’

This is all the evidence we have to offer on the Somerville Portrait. The preliminary objection in respect to costume, as we have seen, is without validity, and may be classed, in House-of-Commons language, as ‘frivolous and vexatious.’ The Picture is not an ideal, but that of an actual man, or still more precisely, an actual Scottish ecclesiastical man. In point of external evidence, unless the original turn up, which is not impossible, though much improbable, there can be none complete or final in regard to such a matter; but with internal evidence to some of us it is replete, and beams brightly with it through every pore. For my own share, if it is not John Knox the Scottish hero and evangelist of the sixteenth century, I cannot conjecture who or what it is.

THE
EARLY KINGS OF NORWAY:

ALSO

AN ESSAY ON THE
PORTRAITS OF JOHN KNOX.

GENERAL INDEX.

INDEX

TO

KINGS OF NORWAY AND PORTRAITS OF JOHN KNOX.

- AASTA, St. Olaf's mother, 63, 68.
Adam of Bremen, 104 n., 110.
America, discovery of, in Hakon Jarl's reign, 35.
Arneson, Finn, 97.
Arneson, Kalf, 97.
Arran, Earl of, 169.
Arth, sermon by, 159.
Ashdon, Knut's last victory at, 67.
- Balfour, James, 173.
Balnaves of Hallhill, 175.
Beaton, Cardinal, 162, 165, 166; his death, 168, 169.
Beza, Theodore, *Icones*, dedication by, 135, 142; Knox *Icon*, 140; inane account of Knox, 143; letter to Buchanan, 145; payment for 'twa picturis,' 146; cited, 147.
Birkebeins, 122-124.
Bjorn the Chapman, 20, 63.
Boehm, Mr. J. E., 158, 196.
Boswell, *Life of Johnson* cited, 195.
Bothwell, Earl of, 163, 165.
Buchanan, George, 30, 126; tutor to James VI., 136; Beza's letter to, 145, 188; portrait of, in Royal Society, 196; *History* cited, 30; *Epistolæ* cited, 146; Irving's life of, cited, 188.
Bue fights at Jomsburg, 27.
Burlslav, 49, 52.
Burnt Njal, 44.
- Carberry Hill, Battle of, 182.
Chambers's Biographical Dictionary, Knox's portrait in, 156.
- Christianity, beginning of, in Norway, 13-16, 72, Gudbrand's dream, 74-78, fairly taken root, 80.
Chronicle of Man, 115.
Chronology, Norse, uncertainty of, 24, 57, 92.
Cockburn. See Ormiston.
Copper-Captain, Imperial, 128.
Cupar Muir, fight at, 182.
- Dag, 95, 97.
Dahlmann, 5, 16, 36, 101; cited, 1.
Danegelt, 39, 60, 61.
Danes in England, 38; possessions of, massacre of, 60.
Diaze, Jean, 148.
Dunbar, Archbishop, 166.
- Eagle, cutting of an, on human back, 8.
Edmund Ironside, 65.
Einar Tamberskelver, 55, 105.
Elphegus baptises Tryggveson, 40.
Emma, Knut's widow, 101.
Erasmus, 139.
Eric Blood-axe, 9; sons of, made kings, 20.
Eric, Jarl, 28, 52-55; governor of Norway, 57.
Ethelred the Unready pays Danegelt, 39, 40; condition of England under, 59; driven into Normandy, 61, 66, 101.
Etienne, *Printer*, 140.
Eyvind, the Skaldaspillir, 17, 21.
- Falkland, 182.

- Faröer Saga, 35, 37.
 Froben, *Printer*, 140.
 Froste-Thing, 13.
 Fuller, *Church History* cited, 139.

 Glasgow University, portrait of Knox in, 156.
 Gold Harald, 22, 23.
 Gorm of Denmark, 4, 11, 82, 87.
 Goulart, Simon, 136, 147; gives Tyn-dale's portrait for Knox's, 149, 153.
 Government, need of a real, in Eng-land, 128,
Granger, 154.
Grey-geese, law-book, 109.
 Gudbrand, 73-78.
 Gudröd Ljome, 7.
 Gudrun, 'Sunbeam of the Grove,' 33.
 Gule-Thing, 13.
 Gunhild, 12, 21.
 Gyda, wife of Fairhair, 4.
 Gylle Krist, 117-119.

 Hakon-Jarl, 22-36; a heathen 'ritu-alist,' 26-28; forced to fly, killed by slave, last support of heathenry, 33; becomes Hakon the Bad, 34; discovery of America in reign of, 35.
 Hakon, Jarl, tilted into the sea, 69-71; breaks his oath, governor of Norway, drowned in Pentland Firth, 92.
 Hakon the Good, adopted by Athel-stan, 12; King of Norway, 13; zealous Christian, 11-15; alarm-fires, death, 19.
 Hakon the Old, 125-127.
 Hakon's Hella, 19.
 Halfdan Haaleg, 7.
 Hamilton, Archbishop, 183.
 Hamilton Palace, absurd portrait of Knox in, 157.
 Hamilton, Patrick, 140.
 Harald Blue-tooth, 12, 16, 25, 28, 51, 87.
 Harald Haarfagr, 3; marries Gyda, six or seven wives, 4, 5; parts his kingdom, 9; sends Baby Hakon to Athelstan, 10.
 Harald Grænske, 45, 63.
 Harald Greyfell, 20-24.
 Harald Harefoot, 93, 101.

 Harald Hardrade, 106; joint King of Norway, 108; death at Stamford Bridge, 113.
 Harald Herdebred, 121.
 Harald Mund, 121.
 Harda-Knut, 93, 101-104.
 Hearne, 59.
 Holyrood House, spurious Knox por-trait in, 156.

 Ironbeard, 47; Tryggveson married to daughter of, 48.

 James VI., Beza's dedication to, 135; Icon of, 136.
 Jomsburg, celebrated vikings of, 26, 29, 52.

 Kennet, 61 n.
 Kirkealdy of Grange, 175.
 Knight, Mr. Charles, 191.
 Knox, John, Beza's Icon of, and inane article on, 142; illustrative pieces from writings and actions of, 159; called to ministry, 170; in French galleys, 171, 172; royal chaplain in England, 175; marries Marjory Bowes, 177; *History of the Reformation*, 181.
 Knox, Miss, portrait in possession of, 156.

 Laing, David, 146, 178; *Works of Knox* cited, 161.
 Laing, S., 51 n.; translation of Snorro-cited, 18.
 Langebeck cited, 59.
 Langniddry, Laird of, 143, 162.
 Large, battle of, 125-127.
 Laurence, Mr. Samuel, 194 n.
 Leif Ericson, 80.
 Lindsay, Sir David, 170.
 Lönecarty, battle of, 29, 30.
 London, siege of, by Svein and Tryg-gveson, 38; by St. Olaf, 65, 66.
 Lymfjord, 23, 83.

 M'Crie's *Life of Knox*, portrait in, 156.
 Magnus Barfod, 115, 116.
 Magnus the Blind, 118, 120.
 Magnus the Good, 100; baptism, 103; succeeds Harda-Knut, 104; shares

- his kingdom with Harald Hardrade, 108; laws, death, 109.
- Mary, Bloody, 176, 179.
- Mary of Guise, 179, 182, 183, 185.
- Mary Queen of Scots, 174; Knox's interviews with, 185-187.
- Merritt, Mr. Henry, 198, 199.
- Munch, 5 n., 24, 104 n.
- Murdoch, King, 115.
- Murray, Regent, 182.
- Muse's Threnodie, The*, 184; cited, 185.
- Oehlenschläger, *Palnatoke* of, 27.
- Olaf the Thick-set (called also *Saint*), 63-99; London Bridge broken down by, 65, 66; engineering skill, 69, 83; beaten by Knut, has to hide, 88; returns to Norway, Snorro's account of, 94-96; dream, death at Sticklestad, 97; 'Saint' ever after, 98.
- Olaf the Tranquil, 114.
- Olaf Tryggveson, 32-56; in Dublin, 32; King of Norway, 34; conversion to Christianity, 38; at Andover, 40; Thor's gold collar sent to Sigrid, 46; marries Ironbeard's daughter, 48; marries Thyri, splendour of his ships, last fight, death, 50-56.
- Onund, 82, 84.
- Ormiston, Laird of, 143, 162, 165.
- Penny, Mr., engraving of the *Torpichen* Knox, 154.
- Pentland Firth, Jarl Hakon wrecked in, 92.
- Pinkie, battle of, 173, 181.
- Porbus, Francis, 196-199.
- Puritanism, importance of, Scottish and English, 189.
- Rane, the Far-travelled, 63.
- Rapin, 1, 61 n.
- Reformation, Knox's History of the*, 181.
- Rognwald (Reginald) of Möre, 4; murdered, 7.
- Rolf the Ganger, infetment of Normandy, 6; surname, 7.
- Rough, John, 170.
- Ruskin, John, 'Who is best man?' 129; *Fors Clavigera* cited, 130.
- Sagas, value of the, Snorro's History mainly made out of, 1.
- St. Andrews, futile siege of, by Arran, 169; *oubliette* of, 166, 169; surrenders to the French, 171.
- St. Johnston ribbands, 184.
- St. Olaf. See Olaf the Thick-set.
- Sandilands of Caldor, 165.
- Saxon Chronicle, 5 n., 22, 61 n., 99 n., 101 n., 104.
- Sea-robbery, distinguished career for Norse gentlemen, 6.
- Settlements, early Norse, in Normandy, 6.
- Sigrid the Proud, 45; sets fire to her lovers, 45.
- Sigurd, Jarl of Lade, 16; father of Hakon-Jarl, 20.
- Sigurd Syr, St. Olaf's stepfather, 63, 64; amongst his reapers, 68.
- Sigurd the Crusader, 116-120.
- Sigwald, Jarl, 52-55.
- Skreya fights with Hakon the Good, 18.
- Skjalgson, Erling, 88, 90.
- Slim-Deacon, 120.
- Smyth, Hon. Mrs. Ralph, 192, 195.
- Snorro Sturleson, 1, 17, 38, 65, 73; Homeric element in, 94; murder of, 127; noble task to distil a book from the *Heimskringla*, 131.
- Somerville, Lord, 195, 196.
- Somerville portrait of Knox, 158, 190, 198.
- Stamford Bridge, battle of, 111-113.
- Sticklestad, battle of, eclipse of the sun, 99.
- Svein Estrithson, 86; King of Denmark, 86, 104, 105, 110.
- Svein Forkbeard vows to conquer England, 28, 29; siege of London by, 38; marries Sigrid the Proud, 49; possessions in England, 59; death, 61, 62.
- Svein of Jomsburg, Knut's bastard son, 100-102.
- Svein founds new dynasty in Norway, 122; Birkebein leader, 123, 124.
- Tait, Mr. Robert, 156, 193.
- Tancred of Hauteville, 6.
- Thangbrand, 43, 44.

- Thorarin, 79.
 Thord Potbelly, 75.
 Thormod, 44.
 Thor's collar, 42.
 Thyri, Tryggveson's wife, 50.
 Torphichen, Lord, portrait of Knox,
 154; reproduced in woodcut, 157.
 Tosti, 110.
 Tryggve, Olaf's father, 20, 63.
 Tryggve Olafson, 102.
 Tryggveson. See Olaf.
 Turf Einar invents peat, 6; cuts an
 eagle on back of Fairhair's son, 8.
 Tyndale, William, 149.

 Ulf, Jarl, helps Knut, death, 84-86.
 Universal suffrage, 128.

 Vaensoun, Adrianc, 146.
 Vansomer, 146.

 Verheiden, 150.

 Wickliffe, Icon of, 137, Beza's article
 on, 138; Fuller on disinterment of,
 139.
 Wilkie, Sir David, portrait of Knox,
 152.
 William the Conqueror, 6.
 Wishart, George, Emery Tylney's bio-
 graphy of, Knox's intercourse with,
 161; Knox on last days of, 165,
 death, 166.
 Wolmar, Melchoir, 148.
*Women, First Blast against the mon-
 strous Regiment of*, 178, 179.
 Wulfstan, Archbishop, sermon on the
 state of England, 59.

 Young, Peter, tutor to James VI.,
 136.

NOTE.

This Index is not incorporated in the one which follows.

THOMAS CARLYLE'S
COLLECTED WORKS.

GENERAL INDEX.

GENERAL INDEX

TO

THOMAS CARLYLE'S COLLECTED WORKS

IN THIRTY VOLUMES.

[For convenience of reference, the order and date of the Volumes are here set down :

- I. *Sartor Resartus*. 1831.
 - II.-IV. *French Revolution*. 1837.
 - V. *Life of Schiller*. 1825.
 - VI.-XI. *Miscellanies*. 1839-69.
 - XII. *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. 1840.
 - XIII. *Past and Present*. 1843.
 - XIV.-XVIII. *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*. 1845.
 - XIX. *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. 1850.
 - XX. *Life of Sterling*. 1851.
 - XXI.-XXX. *Frederick the Great*. 1858-65.]
-

ABBAYE, massacres at, iv. 36; Jourgniac, Sicard and Maton's account of doings there, 42-50. See Prison.
Abbot, Colonel, in Ireland, xv. 220, 287.
Abel, D. Otto, cited, xxiii. 160 n.
Abelard, xi. 302.
Abercromby, at Ticonderago, xxviii. 122.
Aberdeen, Provost, at Dunbar Fight, xvi. 44. See Jaffray.
VOL. XXXI.

Able Man, the born soldier of Truth and Order, xix. 130; appointed by 'divine right' to govern, 158; methods of summoning aloft, 222. See Wisest Man.
Académie des Sciences of Berlin, xxi. 379; xxii. 178.
Acceparation, grande, by Louis XVI., iii. 243-252.
Achard, M., xxiii. 298.
Achilles, xxvii. 377.

- Acre, Siege of, xxi. 112.
 Action the true end of Man, i. 151, 155.
 Actual, the, the true Ideal, i. 188, 190.
 Adalbert's, St., attempt to convert Prussens to Christianity, xxi. 81, 116; xxiv. 178.
 Adam, Johann, Burgermeister, complaints of French rapacity, xxvii. 361.
 Adam, Father. - See St. Huruge, Marquis.
 Adamitism, i. 56.
 Adams, John Quincey, cited on Silesia, xxv. 98.
 Adams of Boston, 'American Cato,' xxx. 95.
 Adelong, cited, xxiv. 141 n., 215 n.; xxv. 210 n., 383 n.; xxvii. 135 n.
 Adieu, vi. 395.
 Adlerfeld, cited, xxi. 448 n.
 Administrative Reform, xix. 113, 146. See Downing Street.
 Adolf Friedrich, Prince, xxv. 350, 352; marries Princess Ulrique, 353; King of Sweden, xxx. 38; his death, 75.
 Adolf of Nassau, Kaiser, xxi. 197.
 Adolphus, Gustavus, death of, v. 275.
 Affection, difference between and genuine originality, vi. 16, 23; the bane of Literature, vii. 15.
 Afflictions, merciful, i. 185.
 Agamemnon's Sceptre, xxi. 3.
 Age, admonitions of our, xx. 240. See Epoch.
 Agincourt, Shakspeare's battle of, xii. 128.
 Agoust, Captain d', seizes two Parlemanteers, ii. 127.
 Aguessau, Chancellor d', xxvi. 241 n.
 Ahlden, Castle of, xxi. 35; xxii. 83, 93, 192; the 'Ahlden Heritage,' 269, 298.
 Ahlden, die Herzogin von, xxi. 36 n.
 Ahremberg, Duke d', xxv. 276, 364; at Dettingen, 286, 382; xxvi. 14, 38, 50; gone all to hebetude, 119; at Sohr, 133; at Eger, xxvii. 145, 146, Leuthen, 404, Hochkirch, xxviii. 95, 107; beaten by Prince Henri at Pretsch, 302.
 Aiguillon, Duke d', at Quiberon, ii. 2; account of, 3; in favour, 3, at death of Louis XV., 26.
 Aintignes, Count d', notice of, ii. 147.
 Aix-la-Chapelle, Charlemagne at, xxv. 213; Treaty of, xxvi. 226, 227, 430.
 Akakia, Doctor, Voltaire's, xxvi. 389; publicly burnt, 394.
 Alabaster, Dr., preaches Popery, xiv. 65.
 Alba, xxi. 261.
 Alberoni, xxii. 3.
 Albert I., Kaiser, harsh and ugly, xxi. 147; assassinated by his nephew, 149.
 Albert II., Kaiser, xxi. 198, 239; xxx. 139.
 Albert Achilles, Kurfürst, xi. 258; xxi. 222; how he managed the Bishop of Bamberg, 225.
 Albert Alcibiades, of Baireuth, xi. 280; xxi. 238; a kind of 'Failure of a Fritz,' 262, 268, 286.
 Albert Archbishop of Mainz, xxi. 228; memorable Sale of Indulgences, 229; at the Diet of Augsburg, 246.
 Albert Friedrich, Second Duke of Preussen, xxi. 300; his marriage, 302; overclouding of mind, 305; death, 332.
 Albert Henry, Prince of Brunswick, xxix. 205.
 Albert Hochmeister, xxi. 251, difficulties about homage to Poland, 252; getting deep into Protestantism, 256; Hereditary Duke of Preussen, 258, 288; his Second Wife; death, 300.
 Albert the Bear, the great Markgraf of Brandenburg, xxi. 93; origin of name, 98, descendants, 158.
 Albert, Prince, of Brunswick, xxvi. 104; killed at Sohr, 132.
 Albert, Prince, of Saxony, Saxon Line of, xi. 256 (see Ernestine Line); his Horoscope and Pedigree, 289; xxix. 325.
 Albert the Courageous, xi. 273.
 Albertaine Line of Saxon Princes, xi. 273.
 Alembert, D', xxvi. 449; letters from Voltaire to, xxviii. 370, 371; meets with the King at Geldern, xxix. 368; declines the post of Perpetual President, 375, letter to Madame du Defand, 376; recommends Helvetius to Friedrich, 377; leaves Potsdam, 393, becomes Friedrich's chief correspondi-

- ent, xxx. 90, 93; writes to him of his interview with Kaiser Joseph, 132; his death, 248: mentioned also, 19, xxix. 375 n.
- Alexander, xxvii. 385, 407.
- Alexius, Czarowitz, xxiii. 90.
- Alfieri and Schiller contrasted, v. 94.
- Algarotti, Signor, xxiii. 392, one of the first *beaux-esprits* of his age, xxiv. 62; with Friedrich at Strasburg, 65; mission to King of Sardinia, 231; at Breslau, xxv. 49; position with Friedrich, xxvi. 340, 417: mentioned also, xxiv. 22, 45, 93, 209, 271.
- Ah, young, Mahomet's kinsman and convert, xii. 69.
- Alson, Dr., xiii. 5, 185.
- Allegory, the sportful shadow of earnest Faith, xii. 8, 36.
- Allen, Trooper, examined, xiv. 285; Ludlow's mistake about, xvii. 87.
- Allen, Adjutant-General, his account of Prayer-Meeting at Windsor, xiv. 335-9; disturbances by, xvii. 87-90.
- Allertoun House, Cromwell at, xvi. 149-151.
- Almacks, high Art at, vi. 299; gum-flowers of, to be made living roses of Eden, ix. 396.
- Almon, cited, xxvii. 202 n.
- Alphonso, King of Castile and sham Kaiser, xxi. 132, 135.
- Alsace, xxv. 285.
- Altar of Fatherland in Champ-de-Mars, in. 68; petition and scene at, 237; christening at, 312.
- Altenburg, xxii. 411. See Prinzenraub.
- Althan, Count d', xxx. 23.
- Altranstadt, Treaty of, xxiv. 176, 192.
- Alured, Thos., M.P., letter by, xiv. 61.
- Alured, Col. Matthew, captures Scots Committee, xvi. 184; Anabaptist, cashiered, xvii. 13-16; Cromwell's letter to, 15.
- Alured, Colonel John, King's Judge, xvii. 16.
- Alyth, Scots Committee extinguished at, xvi. 184.
- Amber, xxi. 80.
- Ambition, i. 108; vii. 65; x. 179, 248, 269, 283; foolish charge of, xii. 263; laudable ambition, 265. See Love of Power.
- Ambitious, question for the, xxiv. 354.
- Amelia, Dowager Empress, xxv. 97.
- Amelia, Princess of England, xxii. 82, xxiii. 359; xxvi. 319; xxix. 143.
- Amelia, Princess of Prussia, xxii. 93; in pecuniary trouble, xxv. 262; Abbess of Quedlinburg, 357; at Berlin Carrousel, xxvi. 271; income small, 376; letter from Friedrich, xxvii. 183; visits Breslau, xxviii. 3; gift from Friedrich, xxix. 343: mentioned also, xxx. 80, 83, 212, 234, 254.
- Amelot, M., xxv. 320, 333, 382.
- America, xxi. 424; Salzgurg Emigrants to, xxiii. 142. See United States.
- American Colonies in great need of a commander, xxvii. 203, 204; prediction (spurious) of their revolt, xxviii. 306, 307; America to be English and not French, 309, xxx. 208; a considerable Fact in the History of the World, 348; unconscious Declaration of Anarchy, ending at last in hideous suicide, 348; America refuses to be taxed by a British Parliament; Boston Tea-Catastrophe, xxx. 93, 95.
- American Cousins, our, no Model Commonwealth, xix. 24; their noblest Battle yet to fight, 25, 274.
- American War, the late, xi. 343.
- Amherst, General, worth of, discerned by Pitt, xxviii. 22; captures Louisbourg, 49, Montreal, 312.
- Amiability, xxiv. 132.
- Amiral, assassin, iv. 328, guillotined, 334.
- Ammon, Von, xxvi. 314.
- Amoneburg, cannonade at, xxix. 318, 321.
- Amps, Mr. Thomas, plotting at his house, xvii. 6.
- Amusements, unvarnished, xi. 238.
- Anabaptists favoured by Cromwell, xiv. 225.
- Anarchies, Millennium of, xxix. 348; not permitted in this World, 413.
- Anarchy, no victory possible to, xi. 387; or open 'Kinglessness,' xix. 9; Constituted Anarchy, 35, 259, 298; Sorcerer's Sabbath of, 375.
- André, St., xxviii. 287.
- André, Excellency, xxvi. 423.

- Andrieux, xxx. 202.
 Anecdotes of Friedrich, xxvii. 375, 377 ;
 xxix. 353.
 Anger, xiii. 114.
 Anglas, Boissy d', President, First of
 Prairial, iv. 382.
 Angoulême, Duchess d', parts from her
 father, iv. 135.
 Angremont, Collenot d', guillotined, iv.
 13.
 Anhalt, Adjutant von, xxix. 314, 365 ;
 xxx. 24, 25, 107 n., 166, 242.
 Anhalt, Graf von, xxvii. 233 ; the An-
 halt forced contributions to Fried-
 rich's war-expenses, xxviii. 139.
 Anhalt-Zerbst, xxi. 94, 159 ; xxii. 382 ;
 xxv. 351.
 Animal attachments, x. 266 ; a wise
 little Blenheim cocker, 267 ; likeness
 to man, 267.
 Ankarström. See Sweden.
 Anne of Cleves, xxi. 303.
 Anne of Courland, afterwards Czarina,
 xxii. 230, 234 n., 383 ; xxiii. 73, 199,
 238, 402 ; xxiv. 139 ; death of, 155,
 256.
 Anne, Princess, of Russia, formerly of
 Mecklenburg, xxiv. 257, 259, 283.
 Anselm, travelling to Rome, xui. 306.
 Anson, Commodore, xxiv. 144, 394 ; his
 memorable Voyage, 402.
 Anspach, xxi. 129, 231 ; xxii. 419. See
 Culmbach, Frederika Louisa.
 Anspach, Margraf of, xxvii. 247.
 Anspach, Margraf of (Lady Craven's),
 with Friedrich at Neisse, xxx. 5, 6.
 Anspach, Margravine of. See Frede-
 rika Louisa.
 Antichrist, xv. 245 ; designated by
 Cromwell, xvii. 29, 31, Magistracy
 considered Antichristian, 30 ; Spain,
 161, 196.
 Antoinette, Marie, splendour of, ii. 38 ;
 applauded, 49 ; compromised by Dia-
 mond Necklace, 70 ; griefs of, 117,
 183 ; her presentiments, 134 ; weeps,
 unpopular, 277 ; at dinner of Guards,
 306 ; courage of, 342 ; Fifth October,
 at Versailles, 346 ; shows herself to
 mob, 352 ; and Louis at Tuileries,
 iii. 9 ; and the Lorrainer, 74 ; and
 Mirabeau, 152, 168 ; previous to
 flight, 195 ; flight from Tuileries,
 198 ; captured, 222 ; and Barnave,
 231 ; in dilemma, 276 ; Coblenz in-
 trigues, 277 ; and Lamotte's Mé-
 moires, 295 ; during Twentieth June,
 324 ; during Tenth August, 363, 365 ;
 behaviour as captive, 375 ; and Prin-
 cess de Lamballe, iv. 39 ; in Temple
 Prison, 102 ; parting scene with
 King, 135 ; to the Conciergerie, 240 ;
 trial of, 242 ; on quitting Vienna,
 244 ; guillotined, 245.
 Antoinette Amelia, of Brunswick, xxiii.
 91.
 Anton Ulrich, Czar Iwan's Father, xxiv.
 156, 256 ; exile, 260, 262.
 Anton Ulrich, of Brunswick, xxii. 102 ;
 xxiii. 88, 91 ; his Great-grandson,
 93, 367, 405.
 Antoninus, xi. 341.
 Antwerp, xxi. 74, 76.
 Apes, Dead-Sea, xiii. 190, 270, 272 ;
 xxi. 213.
 Apologue, the age of, viii. 245.
 Applauders, hired, iii. 278, 289.
 Applewomen knitting at their stalls,
 xxi. 417, 429.
 Apprentices, riots of, xiv. 119, 122, 297,
 334.
 Apprenticeships, i. 119.
 Approval, rightly or wrongly given, xix.
 314, 328.
 Apraxin, Feldmarschall, in Preussen,
 xxvii. 244, 295, 311 ; retires slowly
 home, 296 ; indignantly dismissed by
 the Czarina, xxviii. 7.
 Aprill, Dr., tries to serve Citatio on
 Plotho, xxvii. 321, 322.
 Aprons, use and significance of, i. 41.
 Arab Poets, xiii. 107.
 Arabia and the Arabs, xii. 57.
 Archenholtz, on the 'Oblique Order,'
 xxvii. 384, 390 ; on Lord George
 Sackville, xxviii. 197 ; Prince Henri's
 march of fifty hours, 295 ; Prussian
 recruiting-system, 381 ; at battle of
 Liegnitz, xxix. 66 ; wounded at Tor-
 gau, 123, 181 ; at Leipzig, noticing
 vividly to right and left, 169 ; Prus-
 sian and French exactions, 169, 170 ;
 the Camp of Bunzelwitz, 190 ; siege
 of Colberg, 235 ; the Seven-Years
 War, 338 : cited, xxvii. 12 n ; men-
 tioned also, xxix. 21, 27, 83.

Ardes, Lord of, assists Ormond, xv. 177; at Wexford, 198; at Ross, 201.

Argens, Marquis d', xxv. 144, 146, 156, 335; xxvi. 176, 194, 222, 358, 398; the King's friend for nearly 30 years, 339; visits Friedrich at Breslau, xxviii. 4, 5; letters from Friedrich, xxvii. 407; xxviii. 4, 134, 212, 243, 326, 327, 346; preface to *Œuvres de Poésie*, 348; the confidant of Friedrich's miseries, 391; letters from Friedrich to, xxix. 76, 85, 99, 251, 268, 270; visits him at Leipzig, 149, 329; surprised to see him amusing himself with his dogs, 151, 152; his death, 396.

Argenson, Marquis d', letter from Voltaire to, xxv. 250; their personal friendship, 320; xxvi. 108, 210.

Argental, D', xxvi. 274, 278, 314, 334, 353; xxvii. 304; letters from Voltaire about Friedrich, xxviii. 365, 367, 369.

Argonne Forest, occupied by Dumouriez, iv. 29; Brunswick at, 65.

Argyle, Marquis, dines with Cromwell, xv. 76; Cromwell's letter to, 54; his party in 1650, xvi. 87.

Aristocracies, mutinous, tamed down, xxi. 201, 302, 306. See *Pride of place*.

Aristocracy, our, a word to, ix. 207; ominous condition of our, x. 359, 380, 402; an Aristocracy a corporation of the Best and Bravest, 373, old Feudal Aristocracies, 376, 379; a glimpse of self-vision for them, xi. 235; by nature infinitely important to us, 362; vocal and industrial, 364, 379, 388; our titled, still looked up to, 355; their remaining possibilities, 355, 361, 379; a wide field for younger sons, 355-357; the politest kind of nobleman going, 359; born brother to the industrial noble, 372; and to the teaching, 388; vulgar noble lords, intent on their own game, 390, 391; of Talent, xiii. 34; dreadfully difficult to attain, 37, 41, 299; our Phantasm-Aristocracy, 175, 215, 220, 242, 252, 270, 348, 364; duties of an Aristocracy, 213, 220, 240; Working Aristocracy, 216, 222, 335,

366; no true Aristocracy but must possess the Land, 218, 304; Nature's Aristocracies, 264; a Virtual Aristocracy everywhere and everywhen, 300, the Feudal Aristocracy no imaginary one, 304, 338; a true, or Government by the *Best*, xix. 145; 'Aristocracy' of Popular Suffrage, 318, 338; veritable Hierarchy of Heaven, 329. See *Peerage, Hierarchy*.

Aristocrats, officers in French army, iii. 92, number of, in Paris, iv. 13; seized, 20; condition in 1794, 303.

Arklow, skirmish at, xv. 216.

Arkwright, Richard, historical importance of, x. 398.

Arles, state of, iii. 270.

Arms, smiths making, ii. 223, 226; search for, 223; at Charleville, 226; at Hôtel des Invalides, 229-232; manufacture of, iii. 166, 186; in 1794, iv. 291, scarcity of, in 1792, 15; Danton's search for, 20.

Armstrong, Sir Thomas, notice of, xv. 216.

Army, French, after Bastille, iii. 90-97; officered by aristocrats, 92; to be disbanded, 97; demands arrears, 99, 107; general mutiny of, 99; outbreak of, 100, 107, 109, 124; Nanci military executions, 122; Royalists leave, 131; bad state of, 289, 313; iv. 26, 68 (see Prussia, Austrian); in want, 97; recruited, 284, 286; Revolutionary, 168, 237, 239, 267; fourteen armies on foot, 297, 368.

Army, King's and Parliament's, xiv. 123; of Parliament in 1643, 151, 168, New Model, 201, 226; motions of in 1645, 242, too near London, 278; against Parliament, 279, 281; state of in 1647, 284; at Saffron Walden, 285, and *App.* xviii. 210-3; Agitators in, xiv. 286, 287; will not disband, 287; Rendezvous at Newmarket, 288; at Royston, 289; comes to St. Albans, 290; Manifesto and claims of, 291; Declaration against, expunged, 296; advances to London, 297; enters London, 298; Prayer-Meeting at Windsor Castle, 336; against Treaty with Charles I., xv.

- 86, 91; Remonstrance, 92; at Windsor, 92; in London, St James's, 101. Army, equipments of, in 1651, xvi. 159. Army, the, xiii. 321; value of a good, xxi. 421; xxii. 133.
- Arnald. See Levellers.
- Arnaud, M. Baculard d', xxvi. 275, 288, 289, 312, 315.
- Arnim, Minister of Justice, xxvi. 223.
- Arnim's, Major, gallant defence at Frankfurt, xxviii. 201, 203.
- Arnold, Miller, xxviii. 179; his lawsuit, xxx. 176, 205, 278.
- Aronet, M., Senior, xxiii. 304. See Voltaire.
- Arras, guillotine at, iv. 276. See Lebon.
- Array, Commission of, xiv. 125 (see St. Albans); in Eastern Association, 137.
- Arrestment of the knaves and dastards, xii. 43, 303.
- Arrests in August, 1792, iv. 22.
- Arsenal, attempt to burn, ii. 233.
- Art, all true Works of, symbolic, i. 216; biographic interest in, ix. 5; necessity for veracity in, xi. 247, 364-365; a superabundance of, xx. 206; a windy gospel, 213.
- Arthur Coningsby, Sterling's first Novel, xx. 75, 85, 113.
- Artificial, the, as contrasted with the natural, viii. 343.
- Artist, German ideal of the true, vi. 67, 264; in History, vii. 352; Opera Artists, xi. 238.
- Artists in 1651, xvi. 128-130.
- Artois, M. d', ways of, ii. 39; unpopularity of, 108; memorial by, 147; fled, 250; at Coblenz, iii. 284; will not return, 294.
- Arts, the Fine, a 'Worship of the Beautiful,' xix. 382; intolerable hypocrisy of, 385; taking into fiction, 391.
- Arundel, John, Cromwell's letter in behalf of, xviii. 243.
- Arundel, Earl of, cited, xxi. 345 n.
- Ascanier Markgraves, xxi. 139, 158; resuscitated, 164, 173.
- Ascham, Anthony, slain in Spain, xvii. 196, 211.
- Aschersleben, xxi. 93.
- Ashburnham, Mr., notice of, xvii. 20.
- Ashby-de-la-Zouch, fortified, xiv. 148.
- Ashe, John, M.P., notice of, xv. 86, 89; Cromwell's letter to, 87.
- Ashton, Col., at Preston, xv. 21.
- Ashton, Sir Arthur, Governor of Tre-dah, xv. 172; killed, 176.
- Ass, the, and the Moon, vii. 246.
- Assas, D', at Kloster Kampen, xxix. 139.
- Asseburg finds a wife for Czarowitch Paul, xxx. 91, 92.
- Assemblies, French, Primary and Secondary, ii. 152.
- Assembly, National, Third Estate becomes, ii. 198 (see Estate Third); to be extruded, 200; stands grouped in the rain, 201, occupies Tennis-Court, 202; scene there, 203; joined by clergy, &c., 203, 207; doings on King's speech, 205, 207; ratified by King, 208; cannon pointed at, 209, regrets Necker, 228; after Bastille, 246.
- Assembly, Constituent, National, becomes, ii. 266; pedantic, Irregular Verbs, 267; what it can do, 269; Night of Pentecost, 272 (and iii. 283); Left and Right side, 273 (and iii. 18, 19, see Side); dull, 275; raises money, 299; on the Veto, 299; Fifth October, women, 324, 334, 338; in Paris Riding-Hall, iii. 10; on deficit, assignats, 13; on clergy, 15; and riot, 24; prepares for Louis's visit, 44; on Federation, 61; Anacharsis Clootz, 62, 63; eldest of men, 66; on Franklin's death, 81; on state of army, 101, 107; thanks Bouillé, 120; on Nanci affair, 122; on Emigrants, 161; on death of Mirabeau, 175; on escape of King, 204; after capture of King, 232, 235; completes Constitution, 243, dissolves itself, 248; what it has done, 249.
- Assembly, Legislative, First French Parliament, doings of, iii. 253-271; book of law, quarrel with King, 259; Baiser de Lamourette, 261; High Court, 293; decrees vetoed, 294; scenes in, 295; reprimands King's ministers, 297; smoked out, 298; declares war, 308, 315; Tenth June, 323; declares France in danger, 335,

- 340; reinstates Pétion, 339, brayed glass, 347; nonplus, Lafayette, 353, 354, 361; King and Swiss, August Tenth, 364-371, becoming defunct, 377; and iv. 8, 9; September massacres, 52; dissolved, 74. See Convention, National.
- Assembly, General, answer Cromwell, xvi. 19; his letter to, 20; not allowed to sit, 185. See Divines.
- Assiento, Treaty of, xxiv. 389.
- Assignats, origin of, iii. 13; false Royalist, 285; forgers of, iv. 37; coachfare in, 375.
- Associated Counties, origin of, xiv. 128, 140, raise an Army, 168.
- Astley, Sir Bernard, taken, xiv. 235.
- Astley, Sir Jacob, last of royalist generals, xiv. 253.
- Astonishment, different quantities of, xix. 147.
- Astrua, Mamsell, an Italian singer, xxvi. 370.
- Astruc, Dr., xxvi. 341.
- Atheism, how, melts into nothingness, vii. 278, Richter's Dream of, viii. 69; an impossibility, ix. 114; proselyting Atheist, 288, 294, practical, xiii. 184, 192; and Dupont, iv. 123.
- Athenæum*, copyright of the, changes hands, xx. 51, 54, 75.
- Attila, xxx. 50. See Huns.
- Attorneys, a fat affair for the, xxi. 315, 319, 330, 331.
- Attorney species, extirpation of the, xxvi. 239.
- Aubriot, Sieur, after King's capture, iii. 225.
- Anbry, Colonel, at Jalès, iii. 292.
- Auch, M. Martin d', in Versailles Tennis-Court, ii. 203.
- Augsburg, Diet of, xxi. 244; xxii. 414, 427.
- August Ferdinand, xxii. 97; xxiii. 417.
- August Tenth, 1792, iii. 354-376.
- August Theodor, Kur-Pfalz, xxvi. 118.
- August the Strong, of the three hundred and fifty-four bastards, xi. 281; made King of Poland, xxi. 61, 436; xxii. 45, 52, 375, objects to the Kaiser's Pragmatic Sanction, 109; quarrel with Friedrich Wilhelm, 207; invites him and Friedrich to Dresden, 213, 215; magnificent hospitalities and unspeakable pollutions, 217; his return visit, 224, rumour of a projected marriage with Wilhelmina, 232; Camp of Radewitz, 376; King of Playhouse managers, 388; attained the maximum in several things, 392, meditates partition of Poland, xxiii. 176; xxix. 417; last interview with Grumkow, xxiii. 177; death and absolution, 193; his hunting-lodge, xxvii. 107.
- August III. of Poland, xxiii. 199, 203, 267, 271; suggested for Kaiser, xxvi. 30; his antipathy to Friedrich, 31, 103, how he was benetted by Bruhl and Guarini, 36; taken comfortably to Prag to be out of danger, 157; glad to make peace, 170, 171; Hanbury's account of, 248; withdraws to Pirna, and tries negotiation with Friedrich, xxvii. 60, 61. Headquarters at Struppen, 74, 77; will not agree to Friedrich's terms, 77; snug in the Konigstein, 107; goes to Warsaw, never to come back, 112; gets no compensation for his Saxon losses, xxix. 403; nothing but confusions and contradictions in Poland, 403; difficulties with Czarina Catherine, and death, 404. See Kur-Sachsen.
- August Wilhelm, xxii. 96; with Friedrich at Strasburg, xxiv. 65; betrothed, 127; married, xxv. 124; at his sister's wedding, 354; heir-apparent of Prussia, xxvi. 376; opposition views, xxvii. 44, 45; letter to Valori, 95; lamentations and accusations, 230, 236; put in command at Jung-Bunzlau, 239, 244; finds the problem too hard for him, 252; council of war, 256; a disastrous march, 257; cannot save Zittau, 258, reaches Bautzen, happily unchased, 260; stern reception by the King, 264-266, his death, 266; xxviii. 34; antipathy to Winterfeld, xxvii. 275; mentioned also, xxiv. 61, 131, 135, 159, 305; xxv. 330.
- Augustin, Mosstrooper, xvi. 95, 124, 126.
- Aulaire, Marquis de St., xxvi. 203.

- Austerlitz, xxi. 10.
 Australia, xxi. 424.
 Austria, its quarrel with France, iii. 283. See Brunswick, Duke.
 Austria, xxi. 74, 76; Kaisers of, still riding on the shadow of a saddle, 148; the 'Austrian lip,' 227, 272; rejection of Protestantism, 272; an Austrian swindle, 373; xxiii. 168.
 Austrian Army invades France, iv. 18; unsuccessful there, 75; defeated at Jemappes, 107; Dumouriez escapes to, 183; repulsed, Watigny, 295.
 Austrian Committee, at Tuilleries, iii. 280.
 Austrian-Succession War, xxiv. 340; xxv. 218; conservatism, xxiv. 345; xxv. 34; ponderous pedantry and helplessness, 35, 42; dumb stubborn pride, 204; extraordinary claim for damages, 309, 313; no longer the leading nation of Teutschland, xxvi. 186; share in projected partitioning of Prussia, xxvii. 133; fixed rage and hatred, 138; does not claim Parma and Piacenza, xxviii. 376; gets into sore difficulties as to cash, xxix. 239; anxious to get rid of its pledge to the Reich; truce with Friedrich, 328; peace and general As-you-were, 339; takes forcible possession of Zips, xxx. 36, 37; share in the partition of Poland, 46, 47; intrigues and bargains for succession of Bavaria, 136.
 Auteroche, Marquis d', at Fontenoy, xxvi. 63, 64.
 Autograph (facsimile) of Friedrich's Letter of 'Secret Instruction, &c.' xxvii. 124; Signature, xxx. 135.
 Avignon, Union of, iii. 248; described, 263; state of, 264; riot in church at, 266; occupied by Jourdan, 267; massacre at, 267.
 Axtel, Col., regicide, xvii. 89.
 Aylesbury, Rupert at, xiv. 143.
 Ayr Citadel built by Cromwell, xvi. 186.
 Ayscough, Sir George, notice of, xv. 158, 159; xvi. 267; his house like a ship at sea, xvii. 202: cited, xxii. 257 n.
 BAAS, M. de, intriguer, xviii. 267.
 Babœuf insurrection, iv. 398.
 Bachaumont and La Chapelle, Voyage de, xxiv. 78 n.: cited, xxviii. 354 n.
 Bachmann for three days Russian Commandant of Berlin, xxix. 94.
 Backhoff, Lieutenant-Colonel von, xxx. 297.
 Bacon, Roger, viii. 222.
 Bacon, Nathaniel, author of Burton's Diary, xvii. 277 n.
 Bacon, Lord, xxi. 329.
 Baden Durlach, Prince of, at Hochkirch, xxviii. 97, 107.
 Badness by its nature negative, ix. 41. See Evil.
 Baffometus, Werner's parable of, vi. 117.
 Bagieu, Dr., xxvi. 396.
 Baiern, Kur, sends Embassy to Friedrich, xxvii. 188; in subsidy of France, 355.
 Bailies, Dr., xxx. 110.
 Baille, involuntary epigram of, iii. 300.
 Baillet, cited, xxi. 83 n.
 Bailli de Froulay, xxviii. 358, 363.
 Baillie the Covenanter, xi. 27-66; Scotch Encampment on the Hill of Dunse, 42; domesticities of Kilwinning, 46; Impeachment and trial of Strafford, 51; on Scots Demands, xiv. 109; Apprentices in Palaceyard, 119; flies from Glasgow, xvi. 90; is at Perth, 101; sees Cromwell in Glasgow, 148.
 Bailhe, General, at Preston fight, xv. 19; perplexed, 28; surrenders, 29, 35.
 Bailly, Astronomer, account of, ii. 179; President of National Assembly, 198; Mayor of Paris, 249; receives Louis in Paris, 251; and Paris Parliament, iii. 15; on Petition for Deposition, 237; decline of, 299; in prison, iv. 241; at Queen's trial, 242; guillotined cruelly, 263.
 Baireuth, xxi. 129, 231; genealogy, 388; xxiii. 135, 136. See Culmbach, Albert Alcibiades, Friedrich of.
 Baireuth, Margraf of, xxv. 140, 141, 331; xxvii. 247; xxviii. 153. Margravine of, see Wilhelmina.
 Baker, hanged, iii. 23; bakers', French

- in tail at, ii. 287; iii. 139; iv. 101, 148, 375.
- Balaam and his Ass, ix. 208.
- Balaclava, xxiii. 142.
- Balance of Power, xxii. 123, 124, 127; xxv. 383.
- Balbi, Engineer, xxvi. 449; xxvii. 43, 281; xxx. 8; at siege of Olmutz, xxviii. 30, 33, 36; Schweidnitz, xxix. 296.
- Balder, the white Sungod, xii. 22, 40; Allegory of, xiv. 12.
- Ballenstädt, xxi. 93, 99.
- Ballet-girls, xi. 234.
- Balloons invented, ii. 62; used as spies, iv. 301.
- Ballot-box delusion, xix. 286.
- Balmung, the wonderful Sword, viii. 165.
- Baltimore, Lord, and Maryland, xvii. 85; xxiii. 394.
- Bamberg, xxi. 90; xxiii. 135; Bishop of, xxiv. 63; xxvii. 245; Croats driven out of, xxviii. 154.
- Bamfield, Col., spy, xiv. 273; xvii. 262.
- Bampton-in-the-Bush, *App.* xviii. 195.
- Bankruptcy of Imposture, xix. 15, 170, 383.
- Banks, Mr., on Cromwell, xiv. 19.
- Bannockburn, Cromwell at, xvi. 153.
- Baphometric Fire-baptism, i. 164.
- Bar, Confederation of, xxix. 433-437.
- Bar, Graf von, xxii. 270.
- Barbadoes, delinquents sent to, xvii. 131.
- Barbarossa, Kaiser, xxi. 91, 95, 100, 105; the greatest of all the Kaisers, 102; German tradition about him, 104; xxiii. 125; changed times, xxi. 172; xxii. 442; xxiii. 129; xxiv. 39, 346.
- Barbarous nations, records of, xiv. 7.
- Barbaroux and Marat, iii. 21; Marseilles Deputy, 271; and the Rolands, 271; on Map of France, 318; demand of, to Marseilles, 319; meets Marseillaise, 349; in National Convention, iv. 63; against Robespierre, 95; cannot be heard, 111; the Girondins declining, 163; will not admit, 200; arrested, 201; and Charlotte Corday, 208; retreats to Bourdeaux, 220, 236; farewell of, 248; shoots himself, 249.
- Barber, the, at Lille, iv. 76.
- Barberina, an Opera-dancer, xxv. 349; engagement at Berlin, 368; hospitality to Collini, xxvi. 267, 272.
- Barbier, cited, xxi. 210 n.; xxii. 92 n.; xxiv. 13 n.; xxv. 383 n.; on the French account of their grand scheme for invasion, xxviii. 344.
- Barbone, Mr. Praisegod, account of, xvi. 230.
- Barclay of Ury, Scotch Quaker, xvi. 122.
- Bardy, Abbé, massacred, iv. 44.
- Barebones's Parliament, xvi. 230, 265.
- Bärenklaus, General von, xxv. 119, 153; at Stockstadt, 385; swept from Bavaria, 418; returns with Bathyani, xxvi. 39.
- Barentin, Keeper of Seals, ii. 197.
- Barkstead, Col., a Major-General, xvii. 155 n., 221 n.
- Barlow, Mrs., and Charles II., xv. 198.
- Barnard, Robert, Justice of Peace, xiv. 68, 129; his descendants, 130; Cromwell's letters to, 129, 145.
- Barnardiston, Sir Nathaniel, xi. 145.
- Barnave, at Grenoble, ii. 130; member of Assembly, 177; one of a trio, 274; too reckless, iii. 10; Jacobin, 39; duel with Cazalès, 143; escorts the King from Varennes, 230; conciliates Queen, 231; becomes Constitutional, 233; retires to Grenoble, 306; treason, in prison, iv. 114; guillotined, 265.
- Barnet, Col. Wogan at, xv. 228.
- Barnum, Yankee, methods, xi. 246.
- Baronay, Major-General, at Rothschild, xxiv. 405.
- Barras, Paul-François, in National Convention, iv. 64; commands in Thermidor, 348; appoints Napoleon in Vendémiaire, 395.
- Barrère, Editor, ii. 292; at King's trial, iv. 118; peace-maker, 162, 197; levy in mass, 237; Anacreon of Guillotine, 299; gives dinner-party, plot, 341; banished, 376.
- Bartenstein, Austrian Minister, xxiv. 137; xxv. 36; xxvi. 141.
- Bartholomew massacre, iv. 56; night of, xxi. 273.
- Barton, Col., in Scotland, xvi. 166.
- Basel, xxi. 134.

- Basing House described, xiv. 244; taken, 244-250.
- Bastiani, promoted by Friedrich, xxx. 211, 239.
- Bastille, Linguet's Book on, ii. 69; meaning of, 164; shots fired at, 230; summoned by insurgents, 234; besieged, 236; capitulates, 240, treatment of, captured, 242; Quérét-Demery, 245, demolished, key sent to Washington, 258; Heroes, 259; Electors, displaced, 289; dance on ruins of, iii. 81.
- Bastwick, Dr. John, in pillory, xiv. 96; his Widow provided for, xvii. 81.
- Bates, Dr., sent to Cromwell in Scotland, xvi. 152.
- Bathyan summoned to relief of Prag, xxv. 402; at Beraun, 403; troubles Friedrich's march through Bohemia, 412, 413, 422; in Bavaria, xxvi. 15, 22, 39; supersedes D'Ahremberg, 50, 107.
- Battle, our life-, i. 86, with Folly and Sin, 122, 125; life a continual, vii. 376; all misunderstanding a battle, x. 331; the, appointed for us all, xx. 7; Sterling's gallant enthusiasm, 43, 45; pain and danger shall not be shirked, 73; a doomed voyage, 110, 117; the noblest struggle with the Church, 129; the battle's fury rages everywhere, 240; each man for himself must wage it, 271; like a true son, not like a mutinous rebel, 322, 327.
- Battlefield, a, i. 167; xiii. 238.
- Battles, nature of, ii. 313. See Valmy, Jemappes, Nerwinden, Hond-schooten, Watigny, Howe.
- Baty Kahn, xxiii. 151.
- Bauer, Colonel, at Wesel, xxix. 334; in the Russian-Turk War, xxx. 28.
- Baumgarten, Skirmish of, xxiv. 273.
- Bavaria, Kurfurst of, xxii. 109, 454.
- Bavarian-Succession War, xxx. 136-175, 278, 297.
- Baxter, Richard, opinion of Edgehill battle, xiv. 128; unfriendly to Cromwell, xvii. 10.
- Bayle, xxi. 47; xxii. 61.
- Bazire, of Mountain, iii. 26, 257; imprisoned, iv. 289.
- Beacham, Margery, case of, xvii. 146.
- Beales, xi. 342, 352; answers for the Queen's peace, 351.
- Beard, Dr., schoolmaster, xiv. 37, 65, 68.
- Bearn, riot at, ii. 130.
- Beatson, cited, xxv. 360 n; xxix. 241 n.
- Beatson, Colonel, cited, xxviii. 305 n.
- Beauffremont, xxviii. 345.
- Beauharnais, in Champ-de-Mars, iii. 71; Josephine, imprisoned, iv. 259; and Napoleon, at La Cabarus's, 264.
- Beaumarchais, Caron, his law-suit, ii. 52; his 'Mariage de Figaro,' 73; commissions arms from Holland, iv. 16; his distress, 23.
- Beaumarchais, Voltaire papers saved by, xxv. 323, 326. cited, xxix. 331 n.
- Beaumelle's, M. Angliviel de la, enmity to Voltaire, xxvi. 357-361, 400; cited, 284 n.; account of Maupertuis, xxviii. 338, 339.
- Beaumont, Archbishop, notice of, ii. 18.
- Beauepaire, Governor of Verdun, shoots himself, iv. 27.
- Beausobre, M. de, xxi. 48; xxiii. 296.
- Beauvais, women fighting at the siege of, xxx. 219.
- Beauvau, Marquis de, French Ambassador to Berlin, xxiv. 151; Audience of leave, 163; mentioned also, 205.
- Beauvrye, Captain, xxix. 314.
- Beck, General, advanced to relief of Prag, xxvii. 175; captures Düringshofen's battalion, xxviii. 156; captures Dierecke and his post at Meissen, 329; attacks General Czetteritz, 385, with Loudon in Silesia, xxix. 197; defeated at Reichenbach, 308-310; mentioned also, xxvii. 256, 268; xxix. 57, 75; xxx. 18.
- Becket, Thomas à, xiii. 297, 307; xxi. 99.
- Beckwith, Colonel, at Warburg, xxix. 45; Wesel, 334.
- Bed of Justice, ii. 102.
- Bede, Venerable, x. 388.
- Bedford, Earl, chief of Puritans, xiv. 117; General of Parliament Horse, 127.
- Bedford Level, xiv. 98; xvi. 226.
- Beelzebub not God, xxi. 12; worshippers of, 209; August's Saxon Court of, xxii. 219, 248.

- Beetle, the, vi. 396.
 Beginnings, vii. 390; xiii. 157.
 Bein, Proviant-master, xxx. 134.
 Being, the boundless Phantasmagoria of, i. 51; the lordliest Real-Phantasmagory, x. 7.
 Belgard, xxiii. 389.
 Belief and Opinion, i. 186, 187; French, ii. 184; the true god-announcing miracle, xii. 68, 90, 171, 205; war of, 243; theoretic and actual, xx. 152. See Religion, Scepticism.
 Believing, glory of knowing and, vii. 184; mystic power of belief, viii. 360, 369; ix. 10, 43, 308; the least spiritual belief conceivable, 294; superstitious belief, 364.
 Belleisle, Chevalier de, a magnanimous highflown spirit, xxiv. 249; his brother's right hand, 376; xxv. 195; xxvi. 16, 19; death at the Pass of Col di Sietta, 218, 219.
 Belleisle, Comte de, Soldier and Courtier, xxiii. 200, 207, 266; xxiv. 247; his German Enterprise, 248, 347, with Friedrich at Brieg, 337; mainly to blame for the Austrian Succession War, 343; consummate skill, 363, 365; grandiose schemes, 365, xxv. 11, 131; successful manipulation, xxiv. 367; visits Friedrich, 369, proceeds to Dresden and München, 373; takes up his abode in Frankfurt, 375; xxv. 32; Treaty with Friedrich, 27; a kind of Dictator, 40; his Army crosses the Rhine, 63, 107; rheumatic fever, 111; partial recovery, 117; visits Wilhelmina, 140; Sahay, 191; interview with Friedrich at Kutenberg, 195; Colloquy with Brogho at Prag, 229; defends Prag, 230; much distinguishes himself, 238; gallant retreat, 256, 259; German Enterprise ruined, 299, 382; gives Friedrich bad advice about his Bohemian Campaign, 409; in München, xxvi. 15, 16; on his road to Berlin, 17-20; arrested, and carried to England, 20, 21; in Italy, 200, 209, 218; his grand schemes all bankrupt, 230; War-Minister, xxviii. 6, 123, 189, 335, 346; loses his only son at Crefeld, 48; astonished at Friedrich's marching power, 121; letters to Contades, published by Ferdinand, 197, 347; dies of putrid fever, the last of the grand old Frenchmen, xxix. 173: mentioned also, xxv. 204; xxvii. 76.
 Belleisle, Madame de, interview with Wilhelmina, xxv. 140.
 Bell, Herr Hofrath, xxvi. 304.
 Belling, Colonel, in Pommern, xxviii. 12; looks after the Swedes, xxix. 267; in battle of Freyberg, 325; in Bavarian War, xxx. 165: mentioned also, 37.
 Benda, the Brothers, xxiii. 290.
 Beneckendorf, cited, xxii. 188 n.
 Benefactresses, xii. 262.
 Beneschau, Schwerin takes, xxv. 425.
 Benevolence, xix. 73; Benevolent-Platform Fever, 79, 86.
 Bénézet, Mamsell, xxx. 230.
 Benckendorf, Lieut.-Colonel, turns the fortune of battle at Kolin, xxvii. 226; small recognition of his service, 231.
 Bennet, Richard, Cromwell's letter to, xvii. 85.
 Benoit, Prussian Secretary, xxvi. 445.
 Bentenrieder, the kidnapped Ambassador, xxii. 142, 253.
 Bentham, Jeremy, naturalised, iv. 10: cited, xxi. 77 n.
 Benthamee Radicalism, xiii. 36.
 Benthamism, xii. 89, 203.
 Bentack, Madam de, xxviii. 368.
 Bentley, xi. 318.
 Beraun, Action of, xxv. 403.
 Berenhast, Heinrich von, xxvii. 223.
 Berenhorst, cited, xxiii. 371 n.; xxvii. 224 n.; pique against Friedrich, xxix. 124; his 'Art of War,' 123.
 Bergem-op-Zoom, Siege of, xxvi. 219.
 Bergen, battle of, xxviii. 149, 150.
 Bergerie, M. de la, xxi. 44.
 Berghover, Legationsrath, xxv. 138.
 Berg-Jülich, xxiv. 7, 355.
 Berkley, Sir John, tutor to Duke of York, xvii. 262.
 Berlichingen, General, at Mollwitz, xxiv. 323, 326; in Silesia, xxvi. 80.
 Berlin, early condition of, xxi. 140; Palace at, 214; Royal Academy of, 379, xxii. 179; St. Peter's Church

- burnt down, 373; Friedrich Wilhelm's building operations in, xxiii. 68; Homaging at, xxiv. 49; Treaty of, xxv. 198; opening of the Opera-house, 212; Carrousel, xxvi. 269-273; entered by Haddick, xxvii. 279, 319; agony of commotion at the news of Kunersdorf, xxviii. 281; seized by Tottleben and Lacy, xxix. 90, 98.
- Berline (see Fersen), towards Varennes, iii. 209-217.
- Bernburg, Prince of, at siege of Schweidnitz, xxix. 315.
- Bernburg, Regiment, at siege of Dresden, xxix. 32; at Liegnitz, 69, 78.
- Berne, Oligarchy of, xxvi. 380.
- Berneck, xxiii. 227.
- Berners, Lord, an ancestor of, xiv. 260.
- Berney, Sir Richard, fined, xiv. 140.
- Bernhard of Weimar, xi. 288; xxii. 424.
- Bernis, Cardinal de, xxvii. 31-35; xxviii. 181; letter from Voltaire, 366.
- Bernouilli, Jean, xxiv. 81.
- Bernouilli of Basel, xxviii. 338.
- Berry, Captain, slays General Caven-dish, xviii. 188, 193; Major, at Preston fight, xv. 29; 200*l.* voted to, 38; Colonel, a Major-General, xvii. 155 n.; in favour of Kingship, xviii. 79.
- Berserkir rage, deep-hidden in the Saxon heart, x. 350; xiii. 205.
- Berthier, Intendant, fled, ii. 250; arrested, 256; massacred, 256.
- Berthier, Commandant, at Versailles, iii. 157.
- Bertin, Capt., at Weissenfels, xxvii. 330.
- Berwick summoned by Cromwell, xv. 53, 57.
- Berwick, Maréchal Duc de, xxiii. 212; at Philipsburg, 218, 222.
- Besenal, Baron, Commandant of Paris, on French Finance, ii. 80; in riot of Rue St. Antoine, 162; on corruption of Guards, 211, 213; at Champ-de-Mars, 228; apparition to, 232; de-camps, 246; and Louis XVI., 277.
- Besserer, xxii. 489.
- Bestuchef, Russian Chancellor, xxvii. 28; dismissed, xxviii. 7.
- Bethel, Major, at Bristol siege, xiv. 237.
- Béthune, riot at, ii. 212.
- Beurnonville, with Dumouriez, imprisoned, iv. 182.
- Beutelsbachers, the, xxii. 431.
- Bevern, Brunswick-, Duke of, xxvii. 59, 62; in the battle of Lobositz, 92, 98; advances towards Prag, 144; defeats Königseck at Reichenberg, 147, 149; sent after Daun, 186; finds Daun too strong, 211; joined by the King, 212; retreat from Kolin, 228, 229; at Jung-Bunzlau, 253; at Görlitz to guard Silesia, 269, 270; jealous of Winterfeld, 272, 274; retires into Silesia, 276, 364; defeated at Breslau, 367; prisoner, 368; graciously sent home again; ordered to Stettin, 369; vigilant against the Swedes, xxviii. 12; diligent at Stettin, xxix. 215; defeats the Austrians at Reichenbach, 307-310; his great merit, not of dexterity alone, 308; left in charge of Silesia, 317.
- Bias, Sage, xxv. 17.
- Bible of Universal History, i. 171, 187; xiii. 298; the Hebrew, vii. 296; ix. 183, 314; xix. 211, 387; xxi. 23; a history of the primeval Church, vii. 355; Bible of World-History, infinite in meaning as the Divine Mind it emblems, ix. 313; the truest of books, xi. 366; Dr. Walton's Polyglott, xviii. 261; the Bible of a Nation the authentic Biography of its Heroic Souls, xix. 339, 387; our 'closed Bible,' 377; the most earnest of books, xx. 315. See *Israelitish History*.
- Biddle, Mr., Socinian, xvii. 81.
- Bielfeld, xxiii. 363, 368, 393, 397; his description of George II., xxiv. 53; at siege of Neisse, xxv. 92; Duchess of Wurtemberg, 145; Friedrich's victorious return from Silesia, 199; marriage of Princess Ulrique, 354; xxvi. 322; death, xxix. 396; mentioned also, xxiv. 6, 8, 135, 151, 165; xxvi. 322; xxix. 338: cited, xxii. 139; xxvi. 364.
- Bieren of Courland, xxii. 230; xxiii. 73; xxiv. 155; sent to Siberia, 257; Bieren and Munnich refuse to be reconciled, xxix. 275; to be again Duke of Courland, 403, 408.

- Billaud-Varennes, Jacobin, iii. 299; cruel, iv. 34; at massacres, Sept. 1792, 52; in Salut Committee, 287; and Robespierre's *Etre Suprême*, 331; accuses Robespierre, 345, accused, 374; banished, 376; at Surinam, 385.
- Billingsley, butcher, in Gerard's plot, xvii. 17.
- Bill-stickers, Paris, iii. 36, 133.
- Biographers of Cromwell criticised, xiv. 16. See Heath, Noble, Ludlow, Banks, Maidston, Kimber, Forster, Harris.
- Biography, meaning and uses of, i. 73; significance of biographic facts, 194; a good, almost as rare as a well-spent life, vi. 3; viii. 8; remarks on, ix. 3-22; the basis of all that can interest, 4; of sparrows and cockchafers, 20; need of brevity, 52; the highest Gospel a Biography, 67; 'respectable' English Biographies, x. 6, 221; no heroic Poem but is at bottom a Biography, 218; biographic worth of a true Portrait, xi. 241; no Biography but wraps in it a message out of Heaven, xix. 390.
- Birch, Colonel, at Bristol Siege, xiv. 235.
- Birch, Dr., prints Hammond's letters, xiv. 315; as an editor, xvii. 162.
- Birmingham riot, iii. 283.
- Bishops, pretended Scotch, xiv. 44, Bishops' lands sold, 92; xvi. 208, &c.; insulted, protest, twelve sent to the Tower, xiv. 122; our, and what comes of them, xix. 35, 194, 381; our *new* Souls-Overseers, 202, not our ugliest anomalies, 323.
- Bishopsgate, mutiny in, xv. 140.
- Bismarck's success with Germany, xi. 341.
- Bismarck, Herr Minister von, xxvi. 305.
- Björnstaahl, M., xxx. 86.
- Black Monday, xvi. 206; dragoon, a, in every parish, xx. 43; considerably silvered over, 76.
- Blackwood's Magazine, Sterling's connexion with, xx. 186, 194.
- Blair in Athol, Siege of, xxvi. 40.
- Blake, Col. Robert, relieved, xiv. 226; in Ireland, xv. 211; as Admiral, beats the Dutch, xvi. 207, 220; in Little Parliament, 230; fires the Turkish ships, xvii. 138; letters from Cromwell to, 138, 148, 152, 181, 184, 199, xviii. 83, letter to Cromwell, xvii. 140; sends thirty-eight wagon-loads of silver to London, 255; beats the Spaniards at Santa Cruz, xviii. 33, 80, death of, 34, 83.
- Blakeney, Governor, strives to defend Minorca, xxvii. 39; at Minorca, 277.
- Blanc, Le, laudlord at Varennes, iii. 221; family take to woods, iv. 27.
- Blas, Don, Governor of Carthage, xxiv. 392, 396.
- Blenheim, Battle of, xxi. 405; xxii. 425.
- Bletchington House taken, xiv. 210; *App.* xviii. 195.
- Bligh, General, at Morlaix, xxviii. 122.
- Blockheads, danger of, xiii. 111.
- Blonquet, General Thomas von, xxviii. 249.
- Blood, baths of, ii. 15.
- Blucher, Prince of Wahlstatt, xxix. 62.
- Blumenthal, cited, xxiii. 264 n.; xxvii. 405 n.; Minister von, xxix. 373.
- Blumenthal, Frau von, xxiv. 406 n.: cited, xxvi. 74 n.
- Blumme, i. 134; her environment, 135; character, and relation to Teufelsdröckh, 137, blissful bonds rent asunder, 141; on her way to England, 149.
- Bobus of Houndsditch, xiii. 38, 41, 363; xix. 325.
- Boden, Prussian Finance Minister, xxiv. 33, 54; xxvi. 52.
- Boerhaave, xxvi. 341.
- Bohemia, King of, dies, xiv. 72.
- Bohemian Papists, xxv. 412, 428.
- Boleslaus, Duke of Poland, xxi. 85.
- Bolingbroke, xxiii. 310, 311.
- Bolívar, 'the Washington of Columbia,' xi. 70; Cavalry-uniform, i. 48.
- Boll, cited, xxix. 179.
- Bollandus, cited, xxi. 84 n.
- Bonaparte, Napoleon, viii. 381, 390; ix. 124; his 'Tools to him that can handle them,' our ultimate Political Evangel, x. 106, 230; Varnhagen at the Court of, 304; flung out to St. Helena, xiii. 239. See Napoleon,

- Bonchamps, in La Vendée War, iv. 17.
 Boner, and his *Edelstein*, viii. 238;
The Frog and the Steer, 242.
 Boniface VIII., Pope, xxi. 147.
 Bonnemère, Aubin, at Siege of Bastille,
 ii. 236, 237.
 Bonneville, M. de, Revolutionary spiri-
 tual mountebank, xxi. 210 n.; xxviii.
 352.
 Bonneville, M. de, the demon News-
 writer, stealer and editor of *Œuvres*
du Philosophe de Sans-Souci, and
 author of *Matinées du Roi de Prusse*,
 xxviii. 350-353; swindling exploit,
 and lodgment in Spandau, 354, 355.
 Bonpland, M., and how Dr. Francia
 treated him, xi. 82, 133.
 Books, xiii. 51; influence of, i. 166,
 191; Collections of, xi. 302; two
 kinds of, 315-17; miraculous influ-
 ence of, xii. 189, 195; our modern
 University, Church and Parliament,
 192.
 Bookseller-System, the, ix. 68, 258.
 Borck, an Official not of the Grumkow
 party, xxii. 277, 284, 314, 321, 324,
 400; xxiii. 19.
 Borck, Adjutant-General, accompanies
 the King to Silesia, xxiv. 177; at
 Breslau, 214, 218, 278.
 Borck, Finance Manager, quits Dres-
 den, xxviii. 272; 'old as the Devil,'
 xxiv. 177.
 Borck, Major-General, manages the
 Herstal Affair, xxiv. 111, at Neisse,
 237: mentioned also, 61, 62.
 Borelly, M. xxix. 272.
 Borlace, Col., Cromwell's letter in be-
 half of, xviii. 245.
 Borthwick, Lord, Cromwell's letter to,
 xvi. 96.
 Boscawen, Admiral, xxviii. 49; chases
 and destroys the Toulon Fleet, 255,
 256.
 Bose, Baron von, xxvii. 356.
 Boston refuses to admit taxed tea, xxx.
 93-95.
 Boswell, ix. 18; xii. 216; his character
 and gifts, 32; his true Hero-worship
 for Johnson, 36; his *Johnsoniad*, 39;
 no infringement of social privacy,
 48.
 Bosworth, xxi. 226.
 Boteler, Major. See Butler.
 Botta, Marchese di, Austrian Envoy to
 Berlin, xxiv. 160; to Russia, 259;
 xxvi. 199.
 Bougainville, M., at Quebec, xxviii.
 309.
 Bouillé, at Metz, iii. 87, 153; account
 of, 88, character of, 119; his troops
 mutinous, 98; and Salm Regiment,
 99; intrepidity of, 100, 106; marches
 on Nanci, 114; quells Nanci muti-
 neers, 115-119; at Mirabeau's fune-
 ral, 176; expects fugitive King, 211;
 would liberate King, 227; emigrates,
 227; his recollections of Friedrich,
 xxx. 237-241.
 Bouillé, Junior, asleep at Varennes, iii.
 221; flies to father, 225.
 Bourbon Family Compact, the, xxix.
 240, 241.
 Bourbonism, xxiv. 122.
 Bourcet, cited, xxix. 202 n.
 Bouchier pedigree, xiv. 48.
 Bourdeaux, priests hanged at, iii. 332;
 for Girondism, iv. 189, 221; Sterling
 at, xvii. 165.
 Boyd, Lieut. Robert, joins with Torri-
 jos, xx. 83; at Gibraltar, 88, 90;
 death, 107.
 Boyd, Rev. Zachary, preaches against
 Cromwell, xvi. 90.
 Boyer, duellist, iii. 146.
 Boyer-Fonfrède, notice of, iii. 56.
 Boyer, cited, xxii. 155 n.
 Braddock, General, sent to America,
 xvi. 439; his death, 441; his field
 of battle, xxviii. 122.
 Bradshaw, John, presides at trial of
 Charles I., xv. 105; in Council of
 State, 111; President of, 117; Crom-
 well's letters to, 171, 268; xvi. 15,
 57, 82, 140, 153, 153, 159; in Crom-
 well's First Parliament, xvii. 23; does
 not sign the Recognition, 80; a re-
 jected M P. candidate, 198.
 Bramston, the Shipmoney Judge, notice
 of, xiv. 126.
 Brandenburg, Duke of, mastered, xviii.
 117.
 Brandenburg, early condition of, xxi.
 69, 77; early Markgraves, 86, 93;
 Ascanier Markgraves, 120, 139, 153;
 how Brandenburg and the Hohen-

- zollern Family came together, 146; 160; Bavarian Kurfürsts, 159, 163; a resuscitated Ascanier, 164, 173; Luxemburg Kurfürsts, 177, Brandenburg in Pawn, 185; sold to Friedrich of Hohenzollern, 194; Noble refractory robber-lords, 202; Heavy Peg, 203; beginning of the Prussian Nation, 204; Brandenburg under the Hohenzollerns, 207; lucky enough to adopt the Reformation, 270; Nadir-point of the Brandenburg Hohenzollerns, 343; condition during the Thirty-Years War, 345; again a flourishing country, 351; the Swedes driven out, 363.
- Brandes, Colonel, at Prag, xxv. 438.
- Brandly, Captain, at storm of Tredah, xv. 172.
- Branicki, Polish Crown-General, xxix. 428.
- Breda, Congress of, xxvi. 216.
- Bredow, leads charge at Chotusitz, xxv. 182; xxvi. 350.
- Breitenbach, General, at Hastenbeck, xxvii. 262.
- Brender, Herr, xxiii. 250.
- Brenkenhof, Minister von, xxix. 361; xxx. 82, 278.
- Brennus, reminiscence of, iv. 91.
- Brentano, enters Saxony, xxviii. 256; at siege of Dresden, 260, 294; at Maxen, 320, 323; at Reichenbach, xxix. 309. mentioned also, xxx. 18.
- Breslau, xxiv. 172; able to defend itself, 185, 186; bottled emotion, 210, quiet surrender to Friedrich, 217; unsettled condition, 277; attempted deliverance, xxv. 52; wholly Friedrich's, 56, Homaging, 94; Treaty of, 198; battle of, xxvii. 367, 368; surrendered to the Austrians, 370, recovered by Friedrich, 403; defended by Tauentzien against London, xxix. 50, 51.
- Brest, sailors revolt at, iii. 124; state of, in 1791, 275; *Fédérés* in Paris, 348; in 1793, iv. 267.
- Breteuil, Home-Secretary, ii. 122.
- Breteuil, at Congress of Teschen, xxx. 173.
- Breton, Cape, capture of, xxvi. 70, 432.
- Breton Club, germ of Jacobins, ii. 129.
- Bretons, deputations of, ii. 129; Girondins, iv. 219.
- Brewster, Col. Humphrey, xviii. 275, 281.
- Brewster, Rev. Mr., xvii. 141, 142.
- Brézé, Marquis de, his mode of ushering, ii. 165; and National Assembly, 200, 206; extraordinary etiquette, 206, 350.
- Bribery, xiii. 312; Parliamentary, xxiv. 383.
- Brick-and-mortar Apostleship, xx. 148.
- Bricks, London, xi. 374.
- Brieg, xxiv. 224; siege of, 370.
- Brienne, Loménie, anti-protestant, ii. 45; in Notables, 91; Controller of Finance, 95; incapacity of, 97; edicts by, 100, 112, 113; failure of, 102; arrests Paris Parlement, 106; exasperated, sick, 120; secret scheme, 122; scheme discovered, 124; arrests two Parlementeers, 126; bewildered, 132; desperate shifts by, 133; wishes for Necker, 134; dismissed, and provided for, 135; his effigy burnt, 137.
- Brigands, the, origin of, ii. 158; in Paris, 159, 254; iii. 292; of Avignon, 264.
- Bright, Colonel, at Preston, xv. 31; notice of, 55.
- Briot, Nicholas, engraver, xvi. 128.
- Brindley, xiii. 199.
- Bussac, Duke de, commands Constitutional Guard, iii. 244; disbanded, 295.
- Brissot, edits 'Moniteur,' ii. 170, friend of Blacks, iii. 17; in First Parliament, 256, plans in 1792, 290; active in Assembly, 298; in Jacobins, 302; at Roland's, 305, pelted in Assembly, 340; arrested, iv. 201, 222; trial of, 246, guillotined, 248.
- Bristol, Parliament loses, xiv. 163; storm of, Sept. 1645, 233; Nayler's procession in, xvii. 156.
- Britannic Army of observation, xxvii. 135.
- British Nation, the, a new set of lessons to learn, xix. 110, 190, 198, 214; no real concern with the Continental Anarchies, 174. See England.

- British Translators, viii. 286; Critics, ix. 126.
- Brittany, commotions in, ii. 14, 129, 154.
- Britton, cited, xxviii. 21 n.
- Brocksmouth and House described, xvi. 37, 38.
- Brogill, Lord, in Ireland, xv. 211, 213, 225, 262, 270; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23; in Committee on Kingship, 287, 297, 311.
- Broglio, Maréchal, surprised by the Austrians at Secchia, xxiii. 211; Commandant in Strasburg, xxiv. 71; receives Friedrich incognito, 71, 75; General of the French Army, xxv. 111, 117, 126; Bivouac of Pisek, 117; general incompetency, 150, 151, 172, 238, 242, 272; Skirmish of Sahay, 191; demands D'Harcourt's reinforcements, 224; hurried retreat before Prince Karl, 228; Colloquy with Belleisle, 229; takes command of the Bavarian Army, 246; relieves Braunau, 260; interview with the Kaiser, 268; writes for Order home, 272; retreat across the Rhine, 273; ordered to his own estates; death, 298: mentioned, 411.
- Broglio, Maréchal, at Rossbach, xxvii. 326, 331, 341, 343; the two extreme points of his career, Rossbach and the fall of the Bastille, 354; at Sangerhausen, 360; fight of Sandershausen, xxviii. 124 n.; at Frankfurt-on-Mayn, 145; repulses Ferdinand at Bergen, 149-151; at Minden rather inert, 189-198; eagerly manœuvres against Duke Ferdinand, xxix. 42-46; lays hold of Göttingen, 137; defeated at Langensalza; loses his winter magazines, 164-166; gets into quarrel with Soubise, and is defeated by Ferdinand at Vellinghausen, 200-205; at Versailles, against Plenary Court, ii. 131; in command, 194, 212; in office, 217; dismissed, 250.
- Broglio, Excellency, xxvii. 53, 60; demands admission to the Saxon Camp at Pirna, 75; defends Cassel, xxix. 167.
- Bromley's Collection of Royal Letters, xxi. 231 n.
- Brook, Lord, a Puritan, xiv. 54.
- Brotherhood with the base and foolish, xix. 79.
- Browne, General, born German, xxiv. 188; tries to defend Breslau, 211; a superior soldier, 224, 226, 239; back to Glatz, 272; at Mollwitz, 325; in Bavaria, xxiv. 40; in Italy, 199, 200, 218; in Bohemia, xxvii. 66, 74; enthusiastic help to him, 78; marches to the relief of the Saxons, 79, 80; battle of Lobositz, 84-95; retreats to Budin, 93; will try it another way, 97, arrives at Lichtenhayn, 99; hears nothing from the Saxons, 104; a right valiant soldier and man, 105; recommends Loudon, 121; securing posts in the Metal Mountains, 143; has to retire suddenly to defend Prag, 145, 147, 151; altercations with Prince Karl, 153; battle of Prag, 161, 165, 168; mortally wounded, 170; his last counsel, 174; death, 174, 207, 239: mentioned also, xxiv. 183, 186, 292.
- Browne, Sir John, at Abungdon, xiv. 211; Major-General of Scots, xvi. 155; routed at Inverkeithing, 156.
- Bruhl, Count, xxii. 227; xxiv. 359; xxv. 124; no friend to Friedrich, 398; xxvi. 27; regards him with perfect hatred, 31, 35, 103, 108, 140; twelve tailors always sewing for him, 36; great schemes against Friedrich, 111, 139-142; cannot keep his secret, 143; rage yellower than ever, 157; doom of nations governed by Brühls, 161, 167; xxvii. 65, 103, 116; is a much-illuminated man, xxvi. 169, 170; afraid of Friedrich, xxvii. 5, 12, plots to set the Czarina against him, 12-16; Prussian invasion, 52; withdraws with Polish Majesty to Pirna, 60, 74, 107; communicates with Browne, 99; goes to Warsaw, 112; Brühl's property alone respected by the French, 357; enmity to Friedrich, xxviii. 119; death, xxix. 395, 405; his voracity for lands in Poland, 410.
- Brühl, Henry Count von, vii. 90.
- Bruhl, Madam, xxvii. 120.
- Brummel, Beau, ix. 120, xxvi. 422.

- Brunout, M., among Menads, ii. 331.
 Brunswick-Bevern, Ferdinand Albert Duke of, xxiii. 92, 216, 222, 269. See Elizabeth Christina and Karl Duke of.
 Brunswick, Hereditary Prince of, dashes out of Fulda on the Reichs folk, xxviii. 147, 150; drives out the French post at Gohfeld, 191, 196; marches into Saxony to aid Friedrich, 332; drives the Duke of Würtemberg out of Fulda, 335, 336; at Korbach, xxix. 43; at Emsdorf, 43; Kloster Kampen, 137-141; surprised by Broglio, 166; generally had command of the English troops, 207; in the Bavarian War, xxx. 171; become Duke of, marches on France, iii. 314; iv. 15; advances, Proclamation, iii. 343; at Verdun, iv. 26; at Argonne, 65; at Valmy, 71; retreats, 75: mentioned also, xxx. 14, 265.
 Brunswick. See Anton Ulrich, and Christian of.
 Bucaniering, xiii. 239.
 Buccow, Gen., killed at Torgau, xxix. 126.
 Buch, Johann von, xxi. 143.
 Buchholz, xxiii. 137: cited, xxi. 416 n.; xxii. 45 n.; xxv. 419 n.; xxix. 292 n.
 Buckingham, Duke, accused, xiv. 62; stabbed by Felton, 64; at Kingston, xv. 14.
 Bucksin, the Hon. Hickory, xi. 196.
 Buddaus, Dr., xxvi. 259: cited, xxi. 277 n.
 Buddenbrock, Feldmarschall, xxii. 409, 424; xxiii. 8, 150; at Chotusitz, xxv. 180, 182; at Sohr, xxvi. 131, 132.
 Buddenbrock, son of the above, xxiii. 121, 147, 292; xxx. 212.
 Buderich, Camp at, xxiv. 128.
 Budget, Fixed, xxiv. 42.
 Buffon, Mme. de, and Duc d'Orléans, ii. 115; at D'Orléans' execution, iv. 261.
 Buller, Mrs., death of, xx. 57.
 Bulow, General, with Friedrich at Liegnitz, xxix. 60; at Camp of Bunzelwitz, 195, 216.
 Bulow, Mamsell, xxii. 317, 329, 459, 475.
 Bunau, cited, xxi. 104 n.
 Bunyan, John, notice of, xiv. 225; *Pilgrim's Progress*, xii. 9.
 Buonamici, cited, xxv. 233 n.; xxvi. 200 n.
 Bureaucracy, xix. 173.
 Burford, Levellers at, xv. 143.
 Burgess, Roger, Cromwell's letters to, xiv. 214; defends Farringdon, 215.
 Burgoyne, Sir John, Cromwell's letter to, xiv. 144.
 Burgoyne Brigadier, in Portugal, xxix. 247.
 Burk, Lieutenant, in Portugal, xxix. 247.
 Burke on French Revolution, iii. 281; xxvi. 266.
 Burkersdorf Heights, storming of, xxix. 295-303.
 Burleigh House, xiv. 156; xvii. 190.
 Burney's Dr., account of his visit to Voltaire, xxx. 96-99.
 Burns, vii. 3-71; his hard conditions, 8; a true Poet-soul, 11; like a King in exile, 12; sincerity, 13; his Letters, 16; tenderness and piercing emphasis of thought, 21; the more delicate relations of things, 26; indignation, 29; *Scots wha hae, Macpherson's Farewell*, 30; *Tam O'Shanter, The Jolly Beggars*, 32; his Songs, 34; love of country, 39; passionate youth never became clear manhood, 41; his estimable Father, 42; x. 321; boyhood, and entrance into life, vii. 43; invited to Edinburgh, 47; Sir Walter Scott's reminiscence of him, 48; Excise and Farm scheme, 52; calumny, isolation, death, 54; his failure chiefly in his own heart, 62; a divine behest lay smouldering within him, 68; his kingdom and kingdom, ix. 59; a contemporary of Mirabeau, x. 135, 345, 378; xii. 221; his birth, and humble heroic parents, 222; rustic dialect, 223; the most gifted British soul of his century, 224; resemblance to Mirabeau, 225; his sincerity, 226; his visit to Edinburgh; Lion-hunted to death, 228; xiii. 42, 108, 254, 350; like Apollo taken for a Neatherd, xix. 143; his chivalrous ways, 238; xxii. 26.

- Burntisland surrenders to Cromwell, xvi. 158, 165.
- Burton's Diary criticised, xvii. 276.
- Burton, Rev. Henry, in pillory, xiv. 96.
- Büsching, crude authenticity, xxiii. 119, 121 n.; his Russian Mission, xxiv. 284; xxvi. 371; at Petersburg, xxix. 271; homaging to Czar Peter, 275; sees the Czar on horseback, 277; tumult and revolution, 282-286; Nussler's Interview with the King, 360-363; a dull, though solid accurate kind of man, 360; interviews with Queen Ulrique, xxx. 78-80; gets a new Town School-house for Berlin, 81: cited, xxi. 104 n., 310 n., 365 n.; xxiii. 121 n.; xxiv. 34, 64 n., 241; xxvi. 67 n.; xxvii. 149 n.: mentioned also, xxx. 68, 212.
- Bussy, Sieur de, xxix. 208, 240; conducts Choiseul's negotiations with Pitt, 241.
- Bute, Isle of, its climate and scenery, xx. 9, 18.
- Bute, Lord, xxvii. 289; xxix. 145, 148, 242, 244, 249; his shameful peace, 304, 322, 333.
- Butler, Major, seizes Wildman, xvii. 128; a Major-General, 155 n.
- Butler, Sir Walter, Governor of Killenny, xv. 271; letters to Cromwell, 271, 273, 274, 279; Cromwell's letters to, 270, 272, 275, 279, 280.
- Buttafuoco, Napoleon's letter to, iii. 96.
- Butturlin, Feldmarschall, to command the Russian Army in Silesia, xxix. 184; will not venture upon Friedrich at Bunzelwitz, 193; altercations with Loudon, 195; returns homewards, accelerated by General Platen, 197, 198; sends reinforcements to Romanzow at Colberg, 214; returns to Poland, 235.
- Buzot, in National Convention, iv. 63, 189; arrested, 201; retreats to Bourdeaux, 222, 236; end of, 249.
- Byng, Admiral, xxii. 53, 114; xxvii. '39, 57; burnt in effigy, 57.
- Byron's short career, vi. 81; life-weariness, 255; xiii. 193, 356; his manful yet unvictorious struggle, vi. 284; far enough from faultless, vii. 15, 42; viii. 96; sent forth as a missionary to his generation, vii. 68; poor Byron, who really had much substance in him, x. 247.
- CAABAHA, the, with its Black Stone and sacred Well, xii. 59.
- Cabanis, physician to Mirabeau, iii. 173; metaphysical discoveries, vii. 321; viii. 221.
- Cabarus, Mlle., and Tallien, iv. 268; imprisoned, urgent, 339; her soirées, 363-367.
- Cadiz to be attempted, xvii. 183; blockade of, xxv. 233.
- Caen, Girondins at, iv. 205, 222.
- Cæsar, xxvii. 385, 407; xxix. 83.
- Cagliostro, Count, ix. 311-390; a Liar of the first magnitude, 317; singularly prosperous career, 318; birth and boyhood, 323; with a Convent Apothecary, 326; a touch of grim humour, 327; returns to Palermo, 329; Forgery and general Swindlery, 330; a Treasure-digging dodge, and consequent flight, 333; quack-talent, 341; marriage, and a new game opened out, 343; temporary reverses, 346; potions and love-philtres, 348; visits England, and drives a prosperous trade in the supernatural, 349; Freemasonry, 351; his gift of Tongue, 361; successes and exposures, 366, how he fleeced the Cardinal de Rohan, 372; the Diamond Necklace business, 375; x. 29-96; again in England, ix. 378; Goethe's visit to his family at Palermo, 380; Cagliostro's workday ended, 387; xxx. 258, 270.
- Cahir Castle, Cromwell's letter to Governor of, xv. 267; submits, 268.
- Ca-ira, origin of, iii. 43.
- Calas, Widow, and Voltaire, xxviii. 371.
- Calendar, Romme's new, iv. 229-231; comparative ground-scheme of, 230.
- Calendar, Earl, at Preston fight, xv. 19, 24, 25, 28, 42.
- Calendar House taken by Cromwell, xvi. 155.
- Callenberg, Gräfin von, xxiv. 302; xxv. 168.
- Calmet, Dom, xxvi. 415.
- Calonne, M. de, Financier, character

- of, ii. 83; suavity and genius of, 84; his difficulties, 87, 89; at bay, 90; dismissed, 93; marriage and after-course, 93.
- Calonne, Controller-General, xxx. 256.
- Calvados, for Girondism, iv. 189. See Caen.
- Calvert, Dr., meets Sterling at Madeira, xx. 185; a touching bond of union, 188; accompanies him to Rome, 196, 201; Sterling nurses him in sickness, 206; weather-bound at Falmouth, 243; wearing visibly weaker, 260; death, 270.
- Calvin, xxi. 386; xxii. 61, 477.
- Camas, Colonel, xxii. 37; sent to the French Court, xxiv. 7; to Glatz, 228, 228; death, 336.
- Camas, Madame, Friedrich's great respect for, xxii. 38; xxiv. 336; his Letters to, xxiii. 242; xxix. 136, 174, 267, 269; her death, 395.
- Cambon, notice of, iii. 258.
- Cambray, Congress of, xxii. 54, 116.
- Cambridge, plate, xiv. 126; fortified, 132, 134; Committee, Cromwell's Letters to, 156, 164, 165, and *App.* xviii. 181; royalist prisoners at, xiv. 185; University, Cromwell's letter to heads of Trinity Hall, xv. 104; protected, *App.* xviii. 256; Cromwell's letters to Vice-Chancellor of, 292, 293; superiority of, xx. 42.
- Camdeners, the, xiv. 144.
- Cameron, Dr. Archibald, xxvi. 426; executed, 427; xxx. 130.
- Cameron of Lochiel, xxvi. 426.
- Camille, Desmoulins, x. 199.
- Campan, Mme., Memoirs by, ii. 22 n.
- Campbell, *Lives of the Admirals*, cited, xxii. 53 n.
- Campbell, John, Duke of Argyle, xxv. 220.
- Campitelli, General, marches to join Soltikof, xxviii. 285.
- Campitellis, xxix. 323.
- Camus, Archivist, iin. 259; in National Convention, iv. 74; with Dumouriez, imprisoned, 182.
- Canada rebellion, xix. 180, 186; English and French in, xxvi. 430.
- Candeille, Mlle., Goddess of Reason, iv. 282.
- Candidatus Theologiæ, a, and the King of Prussia, xxi. 429.
- Cannabich, Pastor, xxvi. 253.
- Cannon, Siamese, ii. 224; wooden, iv. 16; Fever, Goethe on, 70.
- Canopus, worship of, xii. 12.
- Cant defined, ii. 67; vii. 15; ix. 38, 95; x. 164; xiii. 76; its effects and prevalence, xiv. 6, 80; xvi. 192; thrice-baleful universe of, xix. 89, 358; sincere, 372; dead and putrid, xx. 117.
- Cantwell Castle surrenders, xv. 287.
- Canute, King, xiii. 60.
- Capel, Lord, motions of, xiv. 132; xv. 42, condemned, 120; dies nobly, 122.
- Capital punishments, xi. 122; xix. 88, 91, 94.
- Carisbrook Castle, Charles I. confined in, xiv. 312.
- Carlingford taken, xv. 181.
- Carlisle demanded by Cromwell, xv. 57; Cromwell at, 81.
- Carlos, Don, Schiller's, published, v. 73, critical account of, 75, scene of the King and Posa, 81; immediate and general approbation, 95; Schiller's own opinion of its worth, 269.
- Carlos II. of Spain, xxi. 63.
- Carlos III. of Spain, xxiii. 36, 208; King of the Two Sicilies, 210, 271; xxv. 235 n.; xxvi. 229; xxviii. 375; a diligent, indignant kind of man, 378; declares war against England, xxix. 209, 240, 241; quarrels with Portugal on account of England, 245-248.
- Carlowitz, Captain, at Prag, xxv. 438.
- Carlyle first hears definitely of Sterling, xx. 102; pleasantly impressed by *Arthur Coningsby*, 114; sees Sterling's Father, 125; first interview with Sterling, 130; listens unprofitably to friendly admonitions, 147; high topics, 152; insists upon the good of evil, 160; a rainy walk, 163; Sterling's friendly sympathy, 177; a sad farewell, 178; a hurried escort, 196; fruitful talk in straitened circumstances, 233; the first human recognition, 235; a strange effluence, 298; the saddest of dinners, 308; sacred possessions, 319; a com-

- mission higher than the world's, 328 : cited, xxx. 257 n.
- Carlyle, Mrs., and Sterling's Mother, xx. 132; Sterling's affectionate remembrance, 167; a humble imitation, 182; a gentle message, 279, love in death, 318.
- Carmagnole costume, what, iv. 267; dances in Convention, 280.
- Carmarthen Committee, Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 215.
- Carmer, Silesian Chancellor von, xxx. 176.
- Carmichaels, the Scottish, xxv. 197.
- Carnival, the, xx. 217.
- Carnot, Hippolyte, notice of, iii. 257; iv. 286; plan for Toulon, 273; discovery in Robespierre's pocket, 341.
- Caroline, Queen, xxi. 235; xxii. 81, 267, 320, 336, 359; a beautiful Brandenburg-Anspach Princess, 101; refuses the Catholic Kaiser, 102; xxiii. 88; Friedrich's letters to, xxii. 237, 317; visit to her foolish Son, xxiii. 346; modest stoicism and death, 347: mentioned also, xxiv. 382.
- Carpentras, against Avignon, iii. 265.
- Carr, cited, xxi. 33 n.
- Carra, on plots for King's flight, iii. 154; in National Convention, iv. 63.
- Carre, Gibby. See Ker.
- Carrier, a Revolutionist, iii. 26; in National Assembly, iv. 63; Nantes noyades, 267, 275, 276; guillotined, 378.
- Carstairs, Principal, a Whig, xvi. 122.
- Carstairs, Rev. John, at Dunbar battle, xvi. 44; in Edinburgh, 108, 109; account of, 122; preaches before Cromwell, 148.
- Cartaux, General, fights Girondins, iv. 216; at Toulon, 272.
- Carte, Jacobite, his opinion on Tredah, xv. 180.
- Carteret, Lord, xxi. 458; xxv. 7, 221, 275, 284; conferences at Hanau, 301; replies to Pitt's threat to resign, xxix. 243: mentioned also, xxv. 419; xxvi. 42, 192, 423; xxvii. 194.
- Cartwright, Dr., message to Cromwell, xv. 289.
- Carthagena, Expedition against, xxiv. 144, 392, 401.
- Carzig, xxiii. 39, 49.
- Cash-payment, x. 376, 383; not the sole relation of human beings, xii. 183, 235, 242; love of men cannot be bought with cash, 386.
- Casimir IV., King of Poland, xxi. 239.
- Casimir V., xxiii. 178. See Poland.
- Casimir. See Culmbach.
- Cassano, Bridge of, xxi. 377, 405.
- Castéra, cited, xxix. 423 n.
- Castle, Col., notice of, xiv. 197; killed at Tredah, xv. 175.
- Castlehaven, Earl, assists Wexford, xv. 190, 198; at Ross, 201.
- Castries, Duke de, duel with Lameth, iii. 145; result of, 145.
- Castries, Marquis de, defends Wesel, xxix. 138-141.
- Catechisms, Theological, xxii. 62.
- Catharine II. of Russia, xxi. 94, 159; xxii. 382; Catherine-Alexiowna, formerly Sophie-Frederike of Anhalt-Zerbst, xxv. 353; xxvii. 23, 28; one of the cleverest of young ladies, 29; Wife of Czar Peter, xxii. 6; at Berlin, 7, 11, 124; her married life, xxix. 262; rapid succession of lovers, 263, 423; books about her, 263; becomes Czarina of Russia, 264; shocked at Colonel Hordt's treatment, 274; misgivings about her husband's conduct; gracious attentions to Hordt, 280; discerns that either Peter or she must fall, 281; conspires for his destruction, 282-6; manifesto against Prussia, afterwards withdrawn, 288; treaty of alliance with Friedrich, 398; difficulties with Poland, 404; virtual sovereign of Poland, and intends to keep so, 420; a kind of she Louis-Quatorze; never in the least a Cat or a Devil towards Poland, 421; makes Poniatowski king, 423; gets impatient of the Dissident Question, 429; locks up the refractory Bishops, 431 (see Turk War); enmity to Maria Theresa, xxx. 35, 43; sumptuously entertains Prince Henri, 38-42; proposes dismemberment of Poland, 42; her share in the partition, 46, 47, 60; mediates on the Bavarian-Succession question, 172, 173; forms alliance with Kaiser Joseph, and hopes to get Constantinople and

- a new Greek Empire, 207, 208; her kindness to Diderot, who pays her a visit at St. Petersburg, ix. 281: mentioned also, xxix. 261 n.; xxx. 201, 228, 245.
- Cathcart, Charles Lord, xxiv. 395.
- Cathedral of Immensity, xi. 99.
- Cathelineau of La Vendée, iii. 272, 291.
- Catholic Church, the old, in its terrestrial relations, xix. 160, Religion, mournful state of, xxiv. 86. See Pope.
- Catt's, De, first interview with Friedrich, xxvi. 450; enters his service, 452; at Breslau, xxviii. 4; Hochkirch, 109; surprised at Friedrich's 'Sermon on the Last Judgment,' 135; introduces Zimmermann to the King, xxx. 70-74.
- Caulaincourt, xxviii. 11 n.
- Caumartin, M., xxiii. 305.
- Cavaignac, Convention Representative, iv. 294.
- Cavendish, General, killed, xiv. 158; xviii. 188, 193; account of, xiv. 161.
- Cazalès, Royalist, ii. 177; in Constituent Assembly, 273; pathetic, iii. 10, duel with Barnave, 143; in danger, 206; emigrant, 284.
- Cazotte, author of 'Diable Amoureux,' iii. 306; seized, iv. 22; saved for a time by his daughter, 40.
- Cecil, Trooper, and Sindercomb, xvii. 267.
- Cellamare, Ambassador, xxii. 4.
- Celts, the, x. 388.
- Centuries, the, lineally related to each other, xiii. 51, 63.
- Cercle Social of Fauchet, iii. 137.
- Ceremonialism in 1610, xiv. 39.
- Cerutti, his funeral oration on Mirabeau, iii. 177.
- Cervantes, vi. 21; x. 227; his death, xiv. 42.
- Cevennes, revolt of, iii. 291.
- Chabot, of Mountain, iii. 257; against Kings, iv. 9; imprisoned, 289.
- Chabray, Louison, at Versailles, October Fifth, ii. 330, 338.
- Chactaw Indian, xiii. 233.
- Chalier, Jacobin, Lyons, iv. 158; executed, 215; body raised, 270.
- Chalmers, cited, xxix. 145 n.
- Chaloner, M.P., a drunkard, xvi. 224.
- Chambon, Dr., Mayor of Paris, iv. 99; retires, 125.
- Chamfort, Cynic ii. 147; arrested, suicide, iv. 326.
- Champ-de-Mars, Federation, iii. 60; preparations for, 62, 68; accelerated by patriots, 69-73; anecdotes of, 71 (see Federation); Federation-scene at, 76-84; funeral-service, Nanci, 120; riot, Patriot petition (1791), 237; new Federation (1792), 339; enlisting in, iv. 32.
- Champs Elysées, Menads at, ii. 318; festivities in, iii. 82.
- Champion of England, the, 'lifted into his saddle,' xiii. 176.
- Chancellors, and their beaten road to the peerage, xix. 341.
- Chancery, Cromwell's reform of, xi. 310, 311; xvii. 10, 133; law-courts, xiii. 319, 322; records, xiv. 55; court to be abolished, xvi. 271.
- Change, the inevitable approach of, manifest everywhere, viii. 351; xi. 64, 289; universal law of, viii. 369, 390; ix. 164.
- Chantilly Palace, a prison, iv. 266.
- Chapelle, La. See Bachaumont.
- Chappe's Telegraph, iv. 300.
- Chapt-Rastignac, Abbé de, massacred, iv. 43.
- Characteristics, viii. 329-376.
- Charenton, Marseillaise at, iii. 349.
- Charlemagne, x. 6; xxi. 71; xxv. 213.
- Charles, Chemist, improves balloons, ii. 62.
- Charles, Prince, returns from Spain, xiv. 50. Charles I., failures of, 58; devices to raise money, 68; goes to Scotland, 72; wars with Scots, 104; shifts to raise an army, 105; his Council of Peers, 106; endeavours to coalesce with Puritans, 117; his difficulties, 118; favours Army-plots, 118; yields a little, 120; goes to Scotland, 121; feasted by London City, 122; attempts to seize Five Members of Parliament, 123; his Queen pawns the crown-jewels, 124; attempts Hull, 124; his Commission of Array, 125; at Oxford, 141; his affairs in August 1643, 168; sends

- for Irish Army, 190; is completely routed, 222; his motions after Naseby battle, 226; in Wales, 253; goes to Scots Army, 253; at Holmby, 260; carried off by Joyce, 288; his manœuvring, 296; at Hampton Court, 298, 309; escapes, 310; goes to Isle of Wight, 312; at Carisbrook Castle, 312; attempts to escape, 330; is denounced, 338; last Treaty with, xv. 72; at Hurst Castle, 101; Trial of, 105; Death-Warrant, 106; execution of, 111; his goods, &c. to be sold, 118. Trial of, sold in Paris, iv. 104; vacuous, chimerical letters of, xi. 38; judicial blindness, 46; at Strafford's Trial, 54; his time, 314; fatally incapable of being dealt with, xii. 254; xix. 263.
- Charles II. at Jersey, xv. 198; character of xvi. 5; with Scots Army, 17; repudiates his father's doings, 29; descended from Elizabeth Mur, 102; crowned at Scone Kirk, 116; at Perth, 22d Nov. 1650, 121; invades England, 165; at Worcester, 170; escapes from Worcester, 177; countenances assassins, xvii. 6; at Middleburg, 127; his embassy to Spain, 196; quarrels with his brother, 261; designation of, by Cromwell, xviii. 123; cold reception of abroad, 147. Mentioned, xix. 195, 353; ix. 14; desperate return of, xi. 353, 360.
- Charles XII. of Sweden, xxi. 189; xxiii. 196; arrives suddenly at Stralsund, xxi. 435; his surprising career, 437, 446; xxii. 3; desperate defence of Stralsund, xxi. 444; assassinated at Frederickshall, 447; last of the Swedish Kings, 448; Treaty of Alt-ranstadt, xxiv. 176, 192, 265.
- Charles Amadeus, King of Sardinia, xxiv. 359.
- Charles Edward the Young Pretender, xxv. 361.
- Charles Emanuel, King of Sardinia, xxv. 231, 234, 338.
- Charleville Artillery, ii. 226.
- Charlotte, Old Queen, xxii. 297; xxiii. 139, 341; her Father, 339; ancestress of England, xxvi. 250; Princess of Mecklenburg, xxix. 175; letter to the King of Prussia, 176-178; question of authenticity, 179.
- Charlotte. See Philippina.
- Charlottenburg, xxi. 46, 53; George I. at, xxii. 88.
- Charter House, Cromwell and the, xvii. 146, 147.
- Chartism, x. 325, 360, 370; history of, not mysterious, 403.
- Chartist Notabilities undergoing their term, xix. 65; Chartist Parliament, 280.
- Chartres, Duke de. See Orléans.
- Chartres, grain-riot at, iv. 100.
- Chassot, Lieutenant, xxiii. 249, 291; Lieutenant-Colonel, xxv. 335; xxvi. 97, 417; affront on his Austrian friend, 250, 251; Voltaire's Hirsch affairs, 303, 304, 346: mentioned also, xxix. 192.
- Châteaubriands, in French Revolution, iv. 325.
- Châteauroux, Madame de la, xxv. 64, 318, 333, 343; her Ministry, 333; with Louis XV. in the Netherlands, 333; dismissed, 339; death, 393.
- Châtelet, Achille de, advises Republic, iii. 206. See Prison.
- Châtelet, the Marquise du, vii. 202; her utter shamelessness, 205; unimaginable death-bed scene, 206.
- Châtelet, Madame du, xxiii. 317, 331; not invited by King Friedrich, xxiv. 58; hope disappointed, 89; her relation to Voltaire not so celestial as it once was, xxv. 319, 336; xxvi. 200; with Voltaire on a visit at Sceaux, 206-213; intrigue with M. de St. Lambert, 215; death from childbirth, 235, 236; mentioned also, xxv. 243, 264.
- Châtelet, Marquis du, in Maillebois's Army, xxv. 106; at Dingelfingen, 269, 273: mentioned also, xxvi. 214, 236, 274.
- Chatham-and-Dover Railway, xi. 377.
- Chatham and his son Pitt, xix. 176.
- Châtillon-sur-Sèvre, insurrection at, iv. 17.
- Chaumette, notice of, iii. 25; iv. 288; signs petition, iii. 237; in governing committee, iv. 12; at King's trial, 117; his grandmother, 119; daily de-

- mands constitution, 216; on Feast of Reason, 279, 282; arrested, jeered, 311; guillotined, 323.
- Chauvelin, Marquis de, in London, iii. 251; dismissed, iv. 140.
- Chauvelin, M. de, xxvi. 349.
- Cheap and Nasty, xi. 340, 373-377.
- Cheapside. See Cross.
- Cheek, Sir Hatton, and Sir Thomas Dutton, xi. 222.
- Chemists, French, inventions of, iv. 291, 292.
- Chenaye, Baudin de la, massacred, iv. 45.
- Chénier, Poet, and Mlle. Théroigne, iii. 302.
- Chepstow Castle taken, xv. 4.
- Chepy at La Force in September, iv. 46.
- Chesterfield, Lord, predicts French Revolution, ii. 17; Johnson's Letter to, ix. 70; mentioned, xxii. 337, 352, 464; xxv. 377; xxvi. 225, 246, 424: cited, 218 n.
- Cheswick, Cromwell at, xv. 59, 62.
- Chétardie, Marquis de la, xxiii. 257, 263; xxiv. 260.
- Chevert, French Brigadier, at Prag, xxv. 257, 258; General, at Hastenbeck, xxvii. 262; Meer, xxviii. 123 n.
- Childhood, happy season of, i. 90; early influences and sports, 92; fresh gaze of, vii. 293, 340; happy Unconsciousness of, viii. 330.
- Children, Sterling's letters to, xx. 210, 315.
- China, literary governors of, xii. 199; Pontiff-Emperor of, xiii. 290.
- Chivalry on the wane, viii. 222, 225; gone, 236, 360; x. 18; of Labour, xiii. 237, 336, 341, 346, 355, 364; Orders, era of, xxi. 114.
- Chlum, Camp of, xxvi. 102.
- Chlumetz, xxiii. 154.
- Chodowiecki, xxi. 456; xxii. 411; his Engravings, xxx. 117 n., 179 n.
- Choiseul, Duke, why dismissed, ii. 3; Colonel Duke, assists Louis's flight, iii. 196, 210, 212, 220; too late at Varennes, 224.
- Choiseul, Duc de, French Minister of Foreign affairs, xxviii. 131, 287, 289, 346; implicated in publication of *Œuvres du Philosophe de Sans Souci*, 353; tries to make mischief between Pitt and Friedrich, 362, 363; letter from Voltaire, 369; xxix. 6; issues peace-proposals, 172; succeeds Belleisle as War-Minister, 174; spasmodic effort towards Hanover, 200, 204; artful negotiations with Pitt, 208, 209, 240; intrigues with Poland and Turkey, 440; xxx. 27; his death, 247.
- Choisi, General, at Avignon, iii. 268.
- Cholmely, Col., notice of, xviii. 226.
- Chotusitz, Battle of, xxv. 178, 192; topography of, 187.
- Christ, the Divine Life of, vi. 281; true reverence for his sufferings and death, 282; allusion to by Tacitus, vii. 167; a Sanctuary for all the wretched, x. 49.
- Christian Faith, a good Mother's simple version of the, i. 98; Temple of the, now in ruins, 185, Passive-half of, 187; Love, 182, 185; Religion, ineffaceable record of the, vii. 233; its sacred silent unfathomable depths, 234; Novalis's thoughts on, 295; how it arose and spread abroad among men, 328; dissipating into metaphysics, viii. 353; in the new epoch, xi. 340; its dead body getting buried, 370.
- Christian Ernst of Baireuth, xxiii. 72.
- Christian Ernst of Saalfeld-Coburg, xxii. 413.
- Christian of Anhalt, xxi. 321, 338.
- Christian of Brunswick, xxi. 337, 339.
- Christian II. of Denmark, a rash unwise explosive man, xxi. 276, 280.
- Christian IV. of Denmark, xxi. 339, 352.
- Christian Wilhelm, Archbishop of Magdeburg, xxi. 340, 348.
- Christianity, grave of, xiii. 174; the Christian law of God found difficult and inconvenient, 208; the Christian Religion not accomplished by Prize-Essays, 233, 236, 251; or by a minimum of Four-thousand-five-hundred a year, 363; ghastly phantasm of, xix. 82, 89; its hatred of Scoundrels, 84; so-called Christian Clerus, 347, 361; Christian Repent-

- ance, 364; Gathercoal's account of the Christian Church, 396. See New Testament, Christian, Religion.
- Church-Clothes, i. 207; living and dead Churches, 208; the modern Church and its Newspaper-Pulpits, 243; its spiritual guidance, ii. 9; of Rome, decay of, 12; and philosophy, 45 (see Clergy); lands sold, iii. 13; Church of Rome dead in France, 187, 193; the, and what it might be, x. 369; 'church' done by machinery, 414; History, a continued Holy Writ, vii. 356; Mother-Church a superannuated stepmother, viii. 360; the English, xiii. 209, 322; Church Articles, 280; what a Church-Apparatus *might* do, 301; Irish Papist, Cromwell's opinion of, xv. 243-248; government, Cromwell's, xvii. 8, 9 (see Bishops); formulas, Sterling's battle with, xx. 3; no living relation to him, 61; singular old rubrics, 63; the dead English, distilled into life again, 70; Sterling's fatal attempt to find sanctuary in it, 114, 118; commended for its very indifference, 132; thrashing of the straw, 171, found wanting, 272, 323. See Books.
- Churches, our best-behaved of, xix. 313. See Law.
- Cicely, Colonel, Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 203.
- Cideville, M. de, xxiv. 97; xxv. 250.
- Cimborgis, xxi. 227.
- Circumstances, influence of, i. 93; man not the product of his, vii. 113; the victorious subduer, ix. 56; their inevitable influence, 287; x. 235.
- Citizens, French, active and passive, iii. 34.
- Civil War. See War.
- Clairaut the Mathematician, letter from Voltaire to, xxviii. 370.
- Clairfait, Commander of Austrians, iv. 18.
- Clamei, Meadow of, xxii. 276, 279.
- Clarendon, Lord, character of, xiv. 81; his notice of Cromwell, 112; on Irish affairs, xv. 297; xxvi. 156.
- Classicality, what meant by, xx. 40.
- Clavière, edits *Moniteur*, ii. 170, account of, iii. 28; Finance Minister, 304, 375; arrested, iv. 201; suicide of, 266.
- Claypole, Lady, her character, xiv. 270; and family, xvi. 143; death of, xviii. 162, 163.
- Claypoles, the, in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23.
- Clayton, Col., Cromwell's letter in behalf of, xviii. 244; General, xxv. 276.
- Clemence, adopts a Swiss, iii. 370.
- Clemence, Princess, Wife of Prince Clement, xxv. 140.
- Clemens, Engraver, xxx. 254 n.
- Clement, August. See Koln.
- Clement, the Hungarian Swindler, xxii. 39, 52.
- Clement, Duke of Baiern, xxv. 136, 140.
- Clement XII., Pope, xxiv. 139.
- Clement, Prince, Nephew of Elector of Koln, xxv. 140.
- Clement, Duchess, protests against the Austrian attempt on Bavaria, xxx. 141, 144; writes to Friedrich, 145; counsels and aids Görtz in the matter, 147.
- Cleon the Tanner, xi. 321, 342, 358.
- Clergy, the, with their surplices and cassock-aprons girt-on, i. 42, 203; French, in States-General, ii. 181; conciliators of orders, 192, 197; joins Third Estate, 195, 197, 200, 202; lands, national? iii. 14, 20; power of, 15; constitution for, 15.
- Clermont, flight of King through, iii. 218, 224; Prussians near, iv. 27.
- Clermont, Prince de, xxiv. 246; succeeds Richelieu, xxvii. 351; beaten by Ferdinand at Crefeld, xxviii. 48; dismissed, 48.
- Cléry, valet, on Louis's last scene, iv. 135.
- Cleve, Wilhelm Duke of, xxi. 302, 310; his Heritage Settlement, 311; death; his Son's tragic career, 312.
- Cleve, Duchy of, xxi. 308; a naturally opulent country, 310; disputed heritage, 313, 318, 330, 355; xxii. 156, 438; occupied by Spanish and Dutch troops, xxi. 327, 331; Friedrich Wilhelm's interest in, xxii. 42, 122, 155, 269, 438; xxiii. 163, 352, Friedrich at, receiving homage, xxiv. 50.

- Cleveland, John, poet, apprehended, xvii. 174.
- Cleveland, Duchess of, xxi. 170.
- Clifton, Sterling at, xx. 225, 253.
- Clive, Robert, x. 400.
- Clogenson, Commentator on Voltaire's Letters, cited, xxv. 321 n.: mentioned also, xxviii. 365.
- Clonmacnoise Manifesto, xv. 235-238.
- Clonmel stormed, xv. 294.
- Clootz, Anacharsis, Baron de, account of, iii. 30; collects human species, 64; disparagement of, 65; in National Convention, iv. 63; universal republic of, 99; on nullity of religion, 279; purged from the Jacobins, 312; guillotined, 314.
- Clothes, not a spontaneous growth of the human animal, but an artificial device, i. 4; analogy between the Costumes of the body and the Customs of the spirit, 34; Decoration the first purpose of Clothes, 37; what Clothes have done for us, and what they threaten to do, 39, 54; fantastic garbs of the Middle Ages, 44; a simple costume, 48; tangible and mystic influences of Clothes, 49, 58; animal and human Clothing contrasted, 53; a Court-Ceremonial *minus* Clothes, 59; necessity for Clothes, 62; transparent Clothes, 65; all Emblematic things are Clothes, 70, 260; Genesis of the modern Clothes-Philosopher, 81; Character and conditions needed, 196, 201; George Fox's suit of Leather, 202; Church-Clothes, 207; Old-Clothes, 231; practical inferences, 261; man never altogether a clothes-horse, ix. 117.
- Clovis, in the Champ-de-Mars, ii. 11.
- Club, Electoral, at Paris, ii. 215, 244; becomes Provisional Municipality, 221; permanent, for arms, &c., 231. See Representatives.
- Club. See Breton, Jacobin, Enraged, Cordeliers, Feuillans, Royalist.
- Club, The Sterling, xx. 194.
- Clubbism, nature of, iii. 137.
- Clubmen, account of, xiv. 227; put down, 229, 230; their designs discovered, 232.
- Clubs in Paris, 1788, ii. 146, 192; in 1790, iii. 39; origin of the term, xxi. 114.
- Clue, De la, Admiral of the Toulon Fleet, xxviii. 255.
- Clugny, M., as Finance Minister, ii. 57.
- Coaches, hackney, in 1654, xvii. 10, 11.
- Cobbett, William, a most brave phenomenon, x. 232, 279.
- Cobenzl, Count, at Berlin, xxx. 123, 157; at Congress of Teschen, 172.
- Coblentz, Royalist Emigrants at, iii. 272, 276, 284-288; xxii. 453.
- Cobourg and Dumouriez, iv. 180, 182.
- Cobwebs, a world overhung with, xx. 43, 111.
- Cocceji, Samuel von, Chief Prussian Law-Minister, xxv. 371, 373; xxvi. 190, 191, 222; finishes his Law-Reform, 239-241; Voltaire's Lawsuit, 304; washes his hands of the sorry business, 309.
- Cocceji jun., marries Barberina, xxv. 371; with Collini at Berlin, xxvi. 267; at Hochkirch, xxviii. 104 n.
- Cochius, xxiii. 413, 416.
- Cockades, green, ii. 218; tricolor, 223; black, 304, 309; national, trampled, 307, 310, white, 307.
- Cockburnspath. See Copperspath.
- Cockpit, the, bestowed on Cromwell, xv. 266.
- Codification, i. 66; the new trade of, vii. 326; viii. 313.
- Coehorn's masterpiece, xxvi. 220.
- Cœur-de-Lion, xiii. 57, 131; King Richard, too, knew a man when he saw him, 144.
- Cœur-de-Lion*, the best of Sterling's Poems, xx. 272, 284, 305, 307; his own account of it, 312.
- Coffinhal, Judge, delivers Henriot, iv. 348.
- Cogniazzo, cited, xxvi. 90 n.; xxvii. 239 n.; on Camp of Bunzelwitz, xxix. 191: mentioned also, xxx. 162.
- Coigny, Duke de, a sinecurist, ii. 81.
- Coigny, Maréchal de, xxv. 298, 314, 360; at Stockstadt, 384; guarding Brisgau, xxvi. 14, 18.
- Coke, Chief Justice, xiv. 43; weeps, 62.
- Colberg, Russian siege of, xxviii. 80

- again besieged by Russia, xxix. 78; siege raised, 87; third and toughest siege of all, 210-215; garrison fairly starved out, 234-237.
- Colbert, xxiv. 248; xxvi. 209.
- Colchester, Cromwell's letters to Mayor of, xiv. 142, 153; tumults at, xv. 3; siege of, 15, 42.
- Coleridge, vii. 251; on Highgate Hill, a Dodona-Oracle, xx. 56, 63; Sterling's assiduous attendance, 65; a magical ingredient in the wild caldron of his mind, 74, 110, 114, 117, 129; waning influence, 159; a lesson for us all, 273.
- Colignon, Colonel, and his recruiting practices, xxviii. 382.
- Collenbach, Plenipotentiary von, xxix. 336.
- Collini, Voltaire's Secretary, xxv. 371; xxvi. 267, 268; his first sight of Voltaire, 273; becomes his secretary, 288, 350, 395, 396, 398; at Frankfurt, 406-413: cited, 268 n.; xxvii. 248 n.
- Collins's Peerage, an excellent book for diligence and fidelity, xi. 312, 313; xix. 338.
- Collet d'Herbois. See Herbois.
- Coln on the Spree, xxi. 141.
- Cologne. See Koln. •
- Colonial Vice-Kings, xi. 356.
- Colonial Office, sad experiences in the, xix. 107; Constitutions for the Colonies on the anvil, 180, 184; our Colonies worth something to the Country, 181; new kind of Governors needed, 187.
- Colomes, England's sure markets among her, xiii. 329.
- Columbus, royalest Sea-king of all, xiii. 248; and the Atlantic, xxiv. 5.
- Colvil, Lord, in Ireland, xv. 264.
- Combination, value of, i. 180, 284.
- Commes, Philippe de, xxx. 25.
- Command and obedience, xix. 201. See Obedience.
- Commerce, new Noblesse of, ii. 16.
- Commissioners, Convention, like Kings, iv. 290, 293, 294.
- Committee, Electoral. See Club, Electoral, Austrian.
- Committee of Defence, iii. 345; iv. 177; Central, iii. 345, 351, 358; of Watchfulness, of Public Salvation, iv. 11, 33, 177, 237, 287, 358; Circular of, 57; of the Constitution, 88; Revolutionary, 175; of Sections, 191; Revolutionary, busy, 266, interim, 1641, xiv. 121; Lincoln, Cromwell's letter to, 149; of Safety, 154, Cambridge, Cromwell's letters to, 156, 164, 165; of Both Kingdoms, account of, 211; of Derby House, 315; Cromwell's letters to, xv. 83, and *App.* xviii. 222; Lancashire, Cromwell's letter to, xv. 21; York, Cromwell's letters to, 39, 41; of Estates, Cromwell's letters to, 56, 64, 73; xvi. 88, 125; of Army, Cromwell's letter to, 127; of Customs, 268; Cromwell's letter to, 268; Committees of Eastern Association, Lists of, 313-325, of Kingship,—see Kingship.
- Committees, Forty-four Thousand, iv. 239.
- Commonwealth established, xv. 112; seal found, 136. See Seals.
- Commons, British House of, i. 40; xi. 126.
- Commonweal, European, tendency to a, viii. 325. See Europe, European Revolution.
- Commonwealth of England demanded, xi. 353, 354.
- Commune, Council General of the, iii. 376; Sovereign of France, iv. 8; enlisting, 11, 33.
- Communes of France, iv. 226.
- Competition and Devil take the hindmost, xiii. 229, 233; abatement of, 334.
- Concealment. See Secrecy.
- Conciergerie. See Prison.
- Condamine, M. de la, xi. 88.
- Condé, Prince de, attends Louis XV., ii. 22; emigrates, 250; Town, surrendered, iv. 224; xxix. 318.
- Condorcet, Marquis, edits *Moniteur*, ii. 170; Girondist, iii. 256, prepares Address, 298; on Robespierre, iv. 164; vanishes, 241; death of, 327.
- Conference. See Hampton Court.
- Confians, Admiral, xxvii. 256, his fleet utterly ruined by Hawke, 341-345.

- Conisby, Sheriff Thomas, sent prisoner to Parliament, xiv. 137.
- Conquest, no, permanent if altogether unjust, x. 357.
- Conrad of Hohenzollern, xxi. 100, becomes Burggraf of Nurnberg, 105; xxi. 418.
- Conrad of Thuringen, xxi. 122; 'whip my Abbot?' 123; plunders Fritzlar; repentance, and Teutsch-Rittervows, 124.
- Conradin, Boy, last of the Hohenstauffens, xxi. 131, 133.
- Conscience, leaders of, ii. 13; the only safehold, viii. 81; singular forms of, ix. 297; not found in every character named human, x. 35, 393; xiii. 137, 281.
- Conscious and unconscious realities, xx. 112, 127.
- Conservatism, noble and ignoble, xiii. 12, 15; John Bull a born Conservative, 203; Justice alone *capable* of being 'conserved,' 205; xxiv. 345.
- Constancy the root of all excellence, vii. 266.
- Constantine of Russia, xxx. 207, 208.
- Constituent Assembly. See Assembly.
- Constitution, French, completed, iii. 243-249; will not march, 261, 277, 280; burst in pieces, 372; new, of 1793, iv. 226, 231. See Sieyes.
- Constitution, our invaluable British, i. 240; x. 391, 395. See Committee.
- Constitutional Government, xxiv. 382.
- Constitutions, how built, ii. 270; the true model of, xix. 27.
- Contades supersedes Clermont, xxviii. 48; against Ferdinand in the Rhine Provinces, 123-125; defeated at Minden, 189-197.
- Contagion, spiritual, vii. 313; viii. 341.
- Conti, Prince de, joins the Army for relief of Prag, xxv. 240; with Broglie at Wolnzach, 268; driven from Degendorf, 271; Army for Italy, 360; in the Middle-Rhine countries, xxvi. 14, 39, 50; retreats across the Rhine, 106, 107; to be a General-in-Chief of the grand Invasion-of-England Army, xxviii. 345; De Ligne's opinion of him, xxx. 20.
- Contrat Social. See Rousseau.
- Convention, National, in what case to be summoned, iii. 246; demanded by some, 295; determined on, 374; coming, 377, Deputies elected, iv. 10, 17, 62; constituted, 74; motions in, 74; work to be done, 88; hated, politeness, effervescence of, 90, on September Massacres, 92; guard for, 92; try the King, 120; debate on trial, 122; invite to revolt, 123; condemn Louis, 127-132; armed Girondins in, 173; power of, 178 (see Mountain, Girondins); removes to Tuileries, 189; besieged (June 2d, 1793), extinction of Girondins, 200, 201; Jacobins and, 224; on forfeited property, 266; Carmagnole, Goddess of Reason, 282; awed to silence, 289; Representatives, 290; at Feast of Etre Suprême, 331, 332, to be butchered? 341, end of Robespierre, 343, 346, 348; retrospect of, 378-380; Féraud, Germinal, Prairial, 380-384; finishes, its successor, 393.
- Conversation, the phenomenon of, ix. 4, 218; sincere and insincere, 49.
- Conversion, i. 190.
- Conway Castle, fortified, xiv. 301. See Williams.
- Conway, Fieldmarshal, at Langensalza, xxix. 168; account of King Friedrich at Potsdam, and at his Silesian Reviews, xxx. 105-113, kindly entertained by Lord Marschal, 107, 111.
- Cook, Col., at Cambridge, xiv. 134; at Wexford, xv. 200.
- Cook, Captain, at Quebec, xxviii. 309.
- Cooke, Henry, taken in Suffolk, xiv. 140.
- Cookery, spiritual, xxi. 19.
- Cooper, Fenimore, what he might have given us, x. 219.
- Cooper, Anthony Ashley, in Little Parliament, xvi. 230; in Council of State, 271 n.; xvii. 8 n.; in Cromwell's First Parliament, 33; is refused the Lady Mary Cromwell, 194 and n.; in Cromwell's Second Parliament, 198, 204; excluded, 254.
- Coote, Sir Charles, in Ireland, xv. 181, 214.
- Cope, General, xxv. 297, 363.

- Cöpenick, xxii. 434.
 Cöper, Secretary, xxviii. 230; xxix. 370.
 Copperspath in Scotland, xvi. 15, 36.
 Copyright Bill, Petition on the, x. 427.
 Coram, Captain, xxvi. 433.
 Corday, Charlotte, account of, iv. 208; in Paris, 209; stabs Marat, 210; examined, 212; executed, 213.
 Cordeliers, Club, iii. 41 (see Danton); Hébert in, iv. 310; silent, 311.
 Coriolanus, position of, xvii. 52.
 Cork House, Dublin, xv. 281.
 Corn-Law Rhymes and Rhymers, ix. 177-211; an earnest truth-speaking man, 187; his bread-tax philosophy, 191; primary idea of all poetry, 195; defects of manner, 197; glimpses into the prophetic Book of Existence, 198; the poor workman's hopeless struggle, 202; *Enoch Wray*, an inarticulate half-audible Epic, 205.
 Corn-Laws, unimaginable arguments for the, xiii. 8, 30, 188, 208; bitter indignation in every just English heart, 206; ultimate basis of, 215; mischief and danger of, 220, 226, 258; after the Corn-Laws are ended, 231, 311, 318; what William the Conqueror would have thought of them, 266; and Sliding-Scales, xi. 65.
 Corne, La, in America, xxvi. 434.
 Cornish heroism, xx. 264.
 Cornwallis, Colonel Edward, xxvi. 433, 434.
 Cornwallis, Lord, xxx. 253.
 Cory, John, his letter, xiv. 138.
 Cossack brutality, xxviii. 55, 204, 233; xxix. 98.
 Côté Droit, &c. See Side.
 Cothenius, Dr., xxvi. 318, 348, 356, 396.
 Cotton, Rev. John, character of, xvi. 197, 198; Cromwell's letter to, 198.
 Council of Ancients, of Five Hundred, iv. 393; of State, members of, xv. 111; first meeting, 117; Cromwell's letter to, xvi. 30; interim, 227, 261; Little Parliament, 271; Cromwell's, xvii. 8 n. See List.
 Councils, Church, xxi. 49; Council of Constance, 191, 195.
 Counties. See Associated.
 Courage, true, viii. 394; ix. 92; xxiii. 94.
 Courland, Duke of, xxiii. 73. See Anne of.
 Court, Chevalier de, and his dagger, iii. 162.
 Court, French Plenary, ii. 121, 129, 131.
 Court-life, teetotum terrors of, x. 27.
 Courten, Chevalier de, at Berlin, xxvi. 30.
 Courtenay, Mr. Hugh, royalist, xvii. 90.
 Courtesies due to all men, i. 231.
 Courtier, a luckless, i. 47.
 Couthon, of Mountain, in Legislative, iii. 257; in National Convention, iv. 74; at Lyons, 270; in Salut Committee, 287; his question in Jacobins, 313; decree on plots, 333; arrested, executed, 346, 351.
 Covenant, Scotch, iii. 53, 60; French, 53, 60; Scots, taken by House of Commons, 1643, xiv. 174.
 Covent Garden, soldiers in, xiv. 277.
 Cowardice, xix. 331, 370, 373.
 Cowbridge, a smart little town, xx. 19, 154.
 Cowell, Col., killed, xv. 52.
 Cowper, Col., in Ulster, xvii. 198.
 Cox, Col., Cromwell's letters to, xviii. 279, 289.
 Coxe, cited, xxii. 91 n.; xxiii. 37 n.; xxvi. 24 n.
 Crabbe on British Liberty, xix. 36; our fatal Oblivion of Right and Wrong, 96; Administrative Reform, 114; Constituted Anarchy, 169; Ducal Costermongers, 204; Ballot-box, 286; Machine for doing Government, 328; so-called Christian *Clerus*, 347.
 Cradock, Rev. Mr., xvii. 142.
 Cramer, cited, xxii. 231 n.
 Cramming, University, xi. 301.
 Crane, Sir Richard, slain, xiv. 235.
 Craven, Lady, xxi. 235; xxii. 302; xxx. 6, 158.
 Crawford, Major-Gen., notice of, xiv. 186, 188, 189; Cromwell's letter to, 186.
 Creation and Manufacture, viii. 333; what few things are made by man, x. 14. See Man, Invention.
 Crébillon, xxvi. 205.
 Crecy, Battle of, xxi. 172; xxvii. 345.

Creed, every, and form of worship, a form merely, vi. 166.

Crefeld, Battle of, xxviii. 48.

Crequi, Duc de, Ambassador to Cromwell, xviii. 148.

Creutz the Finance-Minister, xxi. 451; xxiii. 109.

Crichton, Lord Sanquhar, xi. 219.

Crillon, Duc de, at Weissenfels, xxvii. 329.

Crillon jun., xxx. 91, 92.

Crime, purpose and act of, iv. 35.

Criminals, what to do with our, xix. 87, 328.

Crinoline, fashion of, xxix. 341.

Criticism, German Literary, vi. 60; the Critical Philosophy, 87; petty critics, 294. See British.

Crochardière, M. de la, at Strasburg, xxiv. 75.

Crochet, xxiii. 146.

Croker's, Mr., edition of *Boswell*, ix. 25.

Cromwell, Oliver, significance of, to the Puritan cause, xiv. 14; modern reaction in favour of, 18; birth, kindred, &c., 22, 23; youth of, 25; house where born, 26; his Father's character, 27; his poverty? 29; related to Earl of Essex, 29; his great-grandfather, 30; the 'alias Williams,' 33, his Welsh pedigree, 34; origin of the name, 35; death of his grandfather, 36; idle tales of his youth, 37; his schoolmaster, 37; admitted of Cambridge University, 41; death of his father, 45; death of his grandfather, 45; never of any Inn of Court, 46; marries Elizabeth Bourchier, 48; his uncle an M.P., 50; his hypochondria, 51; becomes Calvinist, 52; subscribes to Feoffee Fund, 54; is a Puritan, 54; visit to his royalist uncle, 56; heir to his uncle at Ely, 58; is M.P. for Huntingdon in 1628, 58; returns to Huntingdon, 63; first mention of in *Commons Journals*, 66; is Justice of Peace, 68; sells his estate, 69. Of his Letters and Speeches, 76; how to read them, 77.

Cromwell, his life at St. Ives, xiv. 87-94; stories of, an enthusiast? 93;

at Ely, 95; character of by Warwick, 99; draining of Fen Country, 99, and xvi. 226; related to Oliver St. John, xiv. 100; once dissolute? 47, 102.

Cromwell, is M.P. for Cambridge, xiv. 105, 107, and *App.* xviii. 179; delivers Lilburn's Petition, xiv. 111; Sir P. Warwick's description of him, 112; dispute with Lord Mandevil, 113; reproved by Mr. Hyde, 113; time spent at Ely, 121; intends for New England? 122; subscribes 300*l.* to reduce Ireland, 125.

Cromwell, gets arms for Cambridge, xiv. 125, his soldiers on the alert, 127; is a Captain of Parliament horse, 127; at Edgehill battle, 128; his movements in 1643, 130; is Colonel, 132; his troopers at St. Albans, 137; takes Lowestoff, 139, preserves Associated Counties, 140, relieves Croyland, 147; skirmish at Grant-ham, 151; takes Stamford, 156; at Gainsborough fight, 157, and xviii. 187; the beginning of his great fortunes, xiv. 161; is Governor of Isle of Ely, 168; his Ironsides, 169; nearly killed at Winceby, 181; complains of Lord Willoughby, 185; at Marston Moor, 192; proceeds with vigour, 202; complains of Earl Manchester, 203; would fire at the King in battle, 204; an incendiary? 206; besieges Farrington, 214; is Lieutenant-General of the Army, 216; at Naseby Battle, 222; heads Schismatic Party, 226; reduces the Clubmen, 228; at Bristol, 233; on uniformity in religion, 240, famous at sieges, 242; takes Winchester, 243; his justice, 244; takes Basing, 245; his character by Mr. Peters, 249.

Cromwell, his duplicity? xiv. 283; his true character, 283; very busy, 306; lands voted to, 320; his Free Offer, 323; his two youngest daughters, 326, 327, 329.

Cromwell in Wales, xv. 4; goes north, 17; at Preston, 20; at Durham, 50; his justice, 66; at Berwick, 67, 69; at Seaton, and Moray House, Edinburgh, 72; feasted there, 76; at Carlisle, 81; his temper, 90; in London,

- 103; attends Trial of Charles I., 105.
- Cromwell made one of Council of State, xv. 111; is Commander for Ireland, 128; routs Levellers, 143; at Oxford, 145; sets out for Ireland, 147; at Bristol, 153; at Dublin, 158; takes Tredah, 171; takes Ross, 206; at Cork, 225; wanted for Scotland, 230; his Declaration to Irish, 239; at Kilkenny, 270; returns to London, 296.
- Cromwell appointed Commander-in-chief against the Scots, xvi. 6, 10; conversation with Ludlow, 7; in Scotland, 13; his generosity to the Scots, 24; encamps on Pentland Hills, 25; comments on Scots Covenant, 26; at Dunbar, 34, 35; straitened at Dunbar, 35; battle of Dunbar, 37, 56; Letters to Edinburgh Ministers, 65, 80; in Glasgow, 90; Proclamation by, in Scotland, 95; another, on surrender of Edinburgh Castle, 113; in Edinburgh, 116; medal of him, 126-129; Chancellor of Oxford, 131, and *App.* xviii. 255-258, 287; dangerously ill at Edinburgh, xvi. 140, 141, 152; at church in Glasgow, 147, 148; at Allertoun House, 149-151; pursues the Scots into England, 169; Worcester battle, 174-181; comes to London, 182, 183; his government of Scotland, 185-187.
- Cromwell on future government of the State, xvi. 202, 203; disbands the Rump, 223-225; his mode of public speaking, 262; in Council of State, 271 n.; made Lord Protector, 274; personal appearance of, 274.
- Cromwell removes to Whitehall, xvii. 11; his First Parliament, 22, 23; difficult position of, 51, 128; accident to, in Hyde Park, 82; his Mother dies, 83.
- Cromwell appoints Major-Generals, xvii. 131, 154; assists Piedmont, 135; xviii. 149-159; dines with Triers, xvii. 136; receives Swedish Ambassador, 150; interviews with George Fox, 156, 157; xviii. 164, 165; on Popery, xvii. 212.
- Cromwell fond of Music, xvii. 274; is offered the title of King, 279, 283; recreations while debating Kingship, 311; refuses the title of King, xviii. 79; a second time installed Protector, 84; unwell, 103, 109; invincible, 148; age and appearance, 161; last sickness of, 163; deathbed sayings and prayer, 163-169; dies, 3d September 1658, 170.
- Cromwell's Battles: Edgehill, 23d Oct. 1642, xiv. 128; Grantham, 13th May 1643, 151, 152; Newbury (first), 20th Sept. 1643, 170; Winceby, 11th Oct. 1643, 180; Marston Moor, 2d July 1644, 192; Cropredy, 30th June 1644, 201; Newbury (second), 27th Oct. 1644, 202; Naseby, 14th June 1645, 221, and *App.* xviii. 200-202; Langport, July 1645, 206; Preston, 17th Aug. 1648, xv. 18, and *App.* xviii. 219; Dunbar, 3d Sept. 1650, xvi. 42-52, and *App.* xviii. 239; Worcester, 3d Sept. 1651, 174-181.
- Cromwell's Letters. (In vol. xiv.) One abstracted, xiv. 55; *App.* xviii. 175; how to read them, xiv. 77; corrections of originals, 79.
- i. To Mr. Storie (St. Ives, 11 Jan. 1635), 87.
 - ii. Mrs. St. John (Ely, 13 Oct. 1638), 95.
 - iii. Mr. Willingham (London, Feb. 1640), 108.
 - iv. R. Barnard, Esq. (Huntingdon, 23 Jan. 1642), 129.
 - v. Deputy-Lieutenants of Suffolk (Cambridge, 10 March 1642), 135.
 - vi. Mayor of Colchester (Cambridge, 23 March 1642), 142.
- Sir Samuel Luke (8 March 1643), *App.* xviii. 194.
- vii. Sir J. Burgoyne (Huntingdon, 10 April 1643), 144.
 - viii. R. Barnard, Esq. (Huntingdon, 17 April 1643), 145.
 - ix. Lincoln Committee (Lincolnshire, 3 May 1643), 148.
 - x. Unknown (Grantham, 13 May 1643), 150.
 - xi. Mayor of Colchester (Lincolnshire, 28 May 1643), 153; *App.* xviii. 187, 190.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xiv.)

- xii. To Cambridge Commissioners (Huntingdon, 31 July 1643), 156.
- xiii. Unknown (Huntingdon, 2 Aug. 1643), 162.
- xiv. Cambridge Commissioners (Huntingdon, 6 Aug. 1643), 163.
- xv. Cambridge Commissioners (Peterborough, 8 Aug. 1643), 165.
- xvi. Suffolk Committee (Cambridge, Sept. 1643), 170.
- xvii. O. St. John, Esq. (Eastern Association, 11 Sept. 1643), 172.
- xviii. Suffolk Committee (Holland, Lincolnshire, 28 Sept. 1643), 174.
- xix. Rev. Mr. Hitch (Ely, 10 Jan. 1643), 184.
- xx. Major-General Crawford (Cambridge, 10 March 1643), 185.
- xxi. Colonel Walton (York, 5 July 1644), 192.
- xxii. Ely Committee (Lincoln, 1 Sept. 1644), 197.
- xxiii. Col. Walton (Sleaford, 6 or 5 Sept. 1644), 198.
- xxiv. Sir T. Fairfax (Salisbury, 9 April 1645), 208; *App.* xvii. 195.
- xxv. Committee of Both Kingdoms (Bletchington, 25 April 1645), 211.
- Same (Farrington, 28 April 1645), *App.* xviii. 197.
- xxvi. Governor R. Burgess (Farrington, 29 April 1645), 213.
- xxvii. The same, same date, 214.
- xxviii. Sir T. Fairfax (Huntingdon, 4 June 1645), 216.
- By Express. To Deputy-Lieutenants of Suffolk (Cambridge, 6 June 1645), 218.
- xxix. Hon. W. Lenthall (Harborough, 14 June 1645), 221.
- xxx. Sir T. Fairfax (Shaftesbury, 4 Aug. 1645), 227.
- xxxi. Hon. W. Lenthall (Bristol, 14 Sept. 1645), 233.
- xxxii. Sir T. Fairfax (Winchester, 6 Oct. 1645), 242.
- xxxiii. Hon. W. Lenthall (Basingstoke, 14 Oct. 1645), 245.
- xxxiv. Sir T. Fairfax (Wallop, 16 Oct. 1645), 250.
- xxxv. Hon. W. Lenthall (Salisbury, 17 Oct. 1645), 252.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xiv.)

- xxxvi. To T. Knyvett, Esq. (London, 27 July 1646), 260.
 - xxxvii. Sir T. Fairfax (London, 31 July 1646), 262.
 - xxxviii. Sir T. Fairfax (London, 10 Aug. 1646), 263.
 - xxxix. J. Rushworth, Esq. (London, 26 Aug. 1646), 266.
 - xl. Sir T. Fairfax (London, 6 Oct. 1646), 268.
 - xli. Mrs. Ireton (London, 25 Oct. 1646), 269.
 - xlii. Sir T. Fairfax (London, 21 Dec. 1646), 271.
 - xliii. The same (London, 11 March 1646), 276.
 - xliv. The same (London, 19 March 1646), 278; *App.* xviii. 206, 210, 212.
 - xlv. Archbishop of York (Putney, 1 Sept. 1647), 300.
 - xlvi. Col. Jones (Putney, 14 Sept. 1647), 302.
 - xlvi. Sir T. Fairfax (Putney, 13 Oct. 1647), 305.
 - xlviii. The same (Putney, 22 Oct. 1647), 307.
 - xlix. Hon. W. Lenthall (Hampton Court, 11 Nov. 1647), 309.
 - i. Colonel Whalley (Putney, Nov. 1647), 311.
 - ii. Dr. T. Hill (Windsor, 23 Dec. 1647), 313.
 - iii. Col. Hammond (London, 3 Jan. 1647), 314.
 - liii. Col. Norton (London, 25 Feb. 1647), 318.
 - liv. Sir T. Fairfax (London, 7 March 1647), 321.
 - lv. Colonel Norton (Farnham, 28 March 1648), 324.
 - lvi. The same (London, 3 April 1648), 326.
 - lvii. Col. Hammond (London, 6 April 1648), 329.
 - lviii. Colonel Kenrick (London, 18 April 1648), 331.
- (In vol. xv.)
- lix. To Hon. W. Lenthall (Pembroke, 14 June 1648), 4.
 - ix. Major Saunders (Pembroke, 17 June 1648), 7.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xv.)

- lxi. To Lord Fairfax (Pembroke, 28 June 1648), 10.
- lxii. Hon. W. Lenthall (Pembroke, 11 July 1648), 16; *App.* xviii. 217, 218.
- lxiii. Lancashire Committee (Preston, 17 Aug. 1648), 21.
- lxiv. Hon. W. Lenthall (Warrington, 20 Aug. 1648), 23.
- lxv. York Committee (Warrington, 20 Aug. 1648), 39.
- lxvi. The same (Wigan, 23 Aug. 1648), 41.
- lxvii. O. St. John, Esq. Knaresborough, 1 Sept. 1648), 44.
- lxviii. Lord Wharton (Knaresborough, 2 Sept. 1648), 46.
- lxix. Lord Fairfax (Alnwick, 11 Sept. 1648), 52.
- lxx. Governor of Berwick (Alnwick, 15 Sept. 1648), 53.
- lxxi. Marquis of Argyle, and the well-affected Lords now in arms in Scotland (near Berwick, 16 Sept. 1648), 54.
- lxxii. Committee of Estates (near Berwick, 16 Sept. 1648), 56.
- lxxiii. Earl Loudon (Cheswick, 18 Sept. 1648), 59.
- lxxiv. Committee of Estates (Norham, 21 Sept. 1648), 64.
- lxxv. Hon. W. Lenthall (Berwick, 2 Oct. 1648), 67.
- lxxvi. Lord Fairfax (Berwick, 2 Oct. 1648), 70.
- lxxvii. Committee of Estates (Edinburgh, 5 Oct. 1648), 73.
- lxxviii. Hon. W. Lenthall (Dalhousie, 8 Oct. 1648), 76.
- lxxix. The same (Dalhousie, 9 Oct. 1648), 78; *App.* xviii. 226.
- lxxx. Governor Morris (Pontefract, 9 Nov. 1648), 82.
- lxxxi. Derby - House Committee (Knottingley, near Pontefract, 15 Nov. 1648), 83.
- lxxxii. Jenner and Ashe (Knottingley, 20 Nov. 1648), 86.
- lxxxiii. Lord Fairfax (Knottingley, 20 Nov. 1648), 91.
- lxxxiv. T. St. Nicholas, Esq. (Knottingley, 25 Nov. 1648), 92.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xv.)

- lxxxv. To Col. Hammond (Knottingley, 25 Nov. 1648), 94.
- lxxxvi. Master and Fellows of Trinity Hall, Cambridge (London, 18 Dec. 1648), 104.
- lxxxvii. Rev. Robinson (London, 1 Feb. 1648), 113.
- lxxxviii.-xc. R. Mayor, Esq., on Richard Cromwell's Marriage (12 Feb. to 8 March 1648), 116-120.
- xc. Dr. Love (London, 14 March 1648), 123.
- xcii.-xcvi. R. Mayor, Esq., on Richard Cromwell's Marriage (14 Mar. 1648 to 15 April 1649), 125-134.
- xcvii. Hon. Sir James Harrington (London, 9 July 1649), 147.
- xcviii. Hon. W. Lenthall (London, 10 July 1649), 149.
- xcix. R. Mayor, Esq. (Bristol, 19 July 1649), 152.
- c. The same (Milford Haven, 13 Aug. 1649), 153.
- ci. Mrs. R. Cromwell (Milford Haven, 13 Aug. 1649), 156.
- cii. Hon. W. Lenthall (Dublin, 22 Aug. 1649), 158.
- ciii. Governor of Dundalk (Tredah, 12 Sept. 1649), 170.
- civ. President Bradshaw (Dublin, 16 Sept. 1649), 171.
- cv. Hon. W. Lenthall (Dublin, 17 Sept. 1649), 173.
- cvi. The same (Dublin, 27 Sept. 1649), 181.
- cvi. The same (Wexford, 14 Oct. 1649), 184.
- cvi.-cxi. Siege of Ross (17-19 Oct. 1649), 200-204.
- cxi. Hon. W. Lenthall (Ross, 25 Oct. 1649), 206.
- cxii. R. Mayor, Esq. (Ross, 13 Nov. 1649), 209.
- cxiv. Hon. Thomas Scott (Ross, 14 Nov. 1649), 210.
- cxv. Hon. W. Lenthall (Ross, 14 Nov. 1649), 212.
- cxvi. The same (Waterford, Nov. 1649), 219; *App.* xviii. 223-231.
- cxvii. The same (Cork, 19 Dec. 1649), 226.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xv.)

cxviii. To Right Hon. Lord Wharton (Cork, 1 Jan. 1649), 230; *App.* xviii. 232.

cxix. Hon. W. Lenthall (Castletown, 15 Feb. 1649), 260.

cxx. Governor of Cahir Castle (Cahir, 24 Feb. 1649), 267.

cxxi. President Bradshaw (Cashel, 5 March 1649), 268.

cxix-cxxviii. Kilkenny Siege (22-27 March 1649-50), 270-280.

cxix. Dublin Commissioners (Carrick-on-Suir, 1 April 1650), 281.

cxix. Hon. W. Lenthall (Carrick, 2 April 1650), 283.

cxix. R. Mayor, Esq. (Carrick, 2 April 1650), 290.

cxix. Richard Cromwell, Esq. (Carrick, 2 April 1650), 292.

(In vol. xvi.)

cxix. To Hon. W. Lenthall (London, 20 June 1650), 9.

cxix. R. Mayor, Esq. (Alnwick, 17 July 1650), 12.

cxix. President Bradshaw (Musselburgh, 30 July 1650), 15.

cxix. General Assembly (Musselburgh, 3 Aug. 1650), 20.

cxix. General Leslie (Camp at Pentland Hills, 14 August 1650), 26.

cxix. Council of State (Musselburgh, 30 Aug. 1650), 30.

cxix. Sir A. Haselrig (Dunbar, 2 Sept. 1650), 35.

cx. Hon. W. Lenthall (Dunbar, 4 Sept. 1650), 45.

cx. Hon. Sir A. Haselrig (Dunbar, 4 Sept. 1650), 54.

cx. President Bradshaw (Dunbar, 4 Sept. 1650), 57.

cx. Mrs. E. Cromwell (Dunbar, 4 Sept. 1650), 59.

cx. R. Mayor, Esq. (Dunbar, 4 Sept. 1650), 60.

cx. Lieut.-Gen. Ireton (Dunbar, 4 Sept. 1650), 61.

cx. Right Hon. Lord Wharton (Dunbar, 4 Sept. 1650), 63; *App.* xviii. 239, 240.

cx. Governor Dundas (Edinburgh, 9 Sept. 1650), 67.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xvi.)

cxviii. To Governor Dundas (Edinburgh, 12 Sept. 1650), 71.

cxlix. President Bradshaw (Edinburgh, 25 Sept. 1650), 82.

cli. Committee of Estates (Linlithgow, 9 Oct. 1650), 88.

cli. Col. Strahan (Edinburgh, 25 Oct. 1650), 91.

clii. Lord Borthwick (Edinburgh, 18 Nov. 1650), 96.

clin. Hon. W. Lenthall (Edinburgh, 4 Dec. 1650), 97.

cliv-clx Siege of Edinburgh Castle (12-18 Dec. 1650), 102-112.

clxi Hon. W. Lenthall (Edinburgh, 24 Dec. 1650), 114.

clxi. Col. Hacker (Edinburgh, 25 Dec. 1650), 117.

clxiii. Gen. Lesley (Edinburgh, 17 Jan. 1650), 119.

clxiv. Committee of Estates (Edinburgh, 17 Jan. 1650), 124.

clxv. Committee of Army (Edinburgh, 4 Feb. 1650), 126.

clxvi. Rev. Dr. Greenwood (Edinburgh, 4 Feb. 1650), 130.

clxvii. The same (Edinburgh, 14 Feb. 1650), 134.

clxviii. Hon. W. Lenthall (Edinburgh, 8 March 1650), 135.

clxix. The same (Edinburgh, 11 Mar. 1650), 137.

clxx. President Bradshaw (Edinburgh, 24 March 1650), 140.

clxxi. Mrs. E. Cromwell (Edinburgh, 12 April 1651), 142.

clxxii. Hon. A. Johnston (Edinburgh, 12 April 1651), 144.

clxxiii. Mrs. E. Cromwell (Edinburgh, 3 May 1651), 151.

— Hammond (Edinburgh, 3 May 1651), *App.* xviii. 247.

clxxiv. President Bradshaw (Edinburgh, 3 June 1651), 153.

clxxv. Hon. W. Lenthall (Linlithgow, 21 July 1651), 155.

clxxvi. President Bradshaw (Dundas, 24 July 1651), 158.

clxxvii. The same (Linlithgow, 26 July 1651), 159.

clxxviii. R. Mayor, Esq. (Burntisland, 28 July 1651), 162.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xvi.)

- clxxix. To Hon. W. Lenthall (Burnt-island, 29 July 1651), 164.
 clxxx. The same (Leith, 4 Aug. 1651), 165.
 clxxxi. Lord Wharton (Stratford-on-Avon, 27 Aug. 1651), 171.
 clxxxii. Hon. W. Lenthall (near Worcester, 3 Sept. 1651), 177.
 clxxxiii. The same (Worcester, 4 Sept. 1651), 178.
 clxxxiv. Rev. J. Cotton (London, 2 Oct. 1651), 196.
 clxxxv. Mr. Hungerford (London, 30 July 1652), 209.
 clxxxvi. A. Hungerford, Esq. (Cockpit, 10 Dec. 1652), 215.
 clxxxvii. Lieut.-General Fleetwood, (Cockpit, 1652), 217.
 clxxxviii. Mr. Parker (Whitehall, 23 April 1653), 226; *App.* xviii. 261, 262.
 clxxxix. Lieut.-General Fleetwood, (Cockpit, 22 Aug. 1653), 266, *App.* xviii. 264.
 xc. Committee of Customs (Cockpit, Oct. 1653), 268.
 xc. H. Weston, Esq. (London, 16 Nov. 1653), 269.
 (In vol. xvii)
 xcii. To R. Mayor, Esq. (Whitehall, 4 May 1654), 12.
 xciii. Lord Fleetwood (Whitehall, 16 May 1654), 13.
 xciv. Col. Alured (16 May 1654), 15.
 xc. Sir T. Vyner (Whitehall, 5 July 1654), 18.
 xcvi. R. Bennet, Esq. (Whitehall, 12 Jan. 1654), 85.
 xc. Capt. Unton Crook (Whitehall, 20 Jan. 1654), 86; *App.* xvii. 272, 279.
 xc. Gen. Blake (Whitehall, 13 June 1655), 137.
 — Edmund Waller (Whitehall, 13 June 1655), 276.
 xc. Lord Fleetwood (Whitehall, 22 June 1655), 141.
 cc. Secretary Thurloe (Whitehall, 28 July 1655), 145.
 cci. Gen. Blake (Whitehall, 30 July 1655), 147.

Cromwell's Letters: (in vol. xvii.)

- ccii. To General Blake (Whitehall, 13 Sept. 1655), 151.
 cciii. The Maryland Commissioners (Whitehall, 26 Sept. 1655), 153.
 cciv. Gen. Goodson (Whitehall, Oct. 1655), 162.
 ccv. D. Serle, Esq. (Whitehall, Oct. 1655), 166.
 ccvi. General Fortescue (Whitehall, Nov. 1655), 168.
 ccvii. Henry Cromwell (Whitehall, 21 Nov. 1655), 173.
 ccviii. The same (Whitehall, 21 April 1656), 178.
 ccix. Generals Blake and Montague (Whitehall, 28 April 1656), 181.
 cc. The same (Whitehall, 6 May 1656), 184.
 cxi. Gresham-College Committee (Whitehall, 9 May 1656), 188.
 ccii. Richard Cromwell (Whitehall, 29 May 1656), 189.
 cciii. Henry Cromwell (Whitehall, 26 Aug. 1656), 195.
 cciv. Generals Blake and Montague (Whitehall, 28 Aug. 1656), 198.
 ccv. Mayor of Newcastle (Whitehall, 18 Dec. 1656), 259.
 ccvi. Cardinal Mazarin (Whitehall, 26 Dec. 1656), 261.
 ccvii. Parliament (Whitehall, 25 Dec. 1656), 278.
 (In vol. xviii.)
 ccviii. To General Blake (Whitehall, 10 June 1657), 83; *App.* 287, 288.
 ccix. Gen. Montague (Whitehall, 11 Aug. 1657), 86.
 cc. J. Dunch, Esq. (Hampton Court, 27 Aug. 1657), 87.
 ccxi. General Montague (Hampton Court, 30 Aug. 1657), 88.
 ccxii. Sir W. Lockhart (Whitehall, 31 Aug. 1657), 88.
 ccxiii. The same, same date, 93.
 ccxiv. Gen. Montague (Whitehall, 2 Oct. 1657), 95.
 ccxv. Sir W. Lockhart (Whitehall, 26 May 1658), 149; *App.* 292, 298.

Cromwell's Letters: (in App. vol. xviii.)
 To Mr. H. Downhall (Huntingdon,
 14 Oct 1626), 175.
 Mr. Hand (Ely, 13 Sept. 1638),
 178.
 Mayor of Cambridge (London, 8 May
 1641), 181.
 Deputy-Lieutenants of Norfolk (Cam-
 bridge, 26, 27 January 1642), 184,
 185.
 Hon. W. Lenthall (Lincoln, 29 July
 1643), 187.
 Sir John Wray (Eastern Association,
 30 July 1643), 190.
 Sir T. Fairfax (Bletchington, 24
 April 1645), 195.
 Committee of Both Kingdoms (Far-
 ringdon, 28 April 1645), 197.
 Capt. Underwood (Huntingdon, 6
 June 1645), 204.
 A Worthy Member of the House of
 Commons (Langport, July 1645),
 206.
 Colonel Cicely (Tiverton, 10 Dec.
 1645), 203.
 Hon. Sir D. North (London, 30
 March 1647), 204.
 Hon. W. Lenthall, on Army Troubles-
 (Saffron Walden, 3, 8, 17 May
 1647), 210-212.
 Carmarthen Committee (Pembroke,
 9 June 1648), 215.
 Colonel Hughes (Pembroke, 26 June
 1648), 214.
 Mayor, &c. of Haverfordwest (12
 July 1648), 217.
 The same (14 July 1648), 218.
 Derby House Committee (Wigan, 23
 Aug 1648), 219.
 Committee of Derby House (Nor-
 ham, 20 Sept. 1648), 222.
 Hon. W. Lenthall (Boroughbridge,
 28 Oct. 1648), 226.
 Waterford Correspondence (21-24
 Nov. 1649), 228-231.
 Lieut.-General Farrell (Cork, 4 Jan.
 1649), 232.
 Colonel Phayr (Fethard, 9 Feb.
 1649), 237.
 John Sadler, Esq. (Cork, 31 Dec.
 1649), 234.
 Hon. Sir A. Haselrig (Dunbar, 5
 Sept 1650), 239.

Cromwell's Letters. (in App. vol xviii)
 To Hon. Sir A. Haselrig (Edinburgh,
 9 Sept. 1650), 240.
 Hon. W. Lenthall (Edinburgh, 28
 Dec. 1650), 242.
 The same (Glasgow, 25 April 1651),
 243.
 The same (Edinburgh, 10 May 1651),
 244.
 The same (Edinburgh, 13 June
 1651), 245.
 Mayor of Doncaster (Ripon, 18 Aug.
 1651), 249.
 Hon. W Lenthall (Evesham, 8 Sept.
 1651), 250.
 The same (Chipping Norton, 8 Sept.
 1651), 251.
 Elizabeth Cromwell (Cockpit, 15
 Dec 1651), 252.
 Sequestration Committee (Cockpit,
 Dec. 1651), 254.
 Dr. Greenwood of Oxford (Cockpit,
 12 April 1652), 255.
 Lord Wharton (Cockpit, 30 June
 1652), 259.
 Dr. Walton (Whitehall, 16 May
 1653), 261.
 Lieut.-Col. Mitchell (Whitehall, 18
 May 1653), 262.
 Cardinal Mazarin (Westminster, 19
 June 1653), 263.
 Sir Bulstrode Whitlocke (Whitehall,
 2 Sept. 1653), 264.
 Cardinal Mazarin (Whitehall, 26
 Jan. 1653), 265.
 Mayor of Lynn Regis (Whitehall,
 30 Jan. 1653), 266.
 Sir J. Wilde (Whitehall, 24 March
 1654), 272.
 Mayor of Gloucester (Whitehall, 24
 March 1654), 273.
 Cardinal Mazarin (Whitehall, 29
 June 1654), 267.
 Hon. W. Lenthall (Whitehall, 22
 Sept. 1654), 269.
 The same (Whitehall, 5 Oct. 1654),
 270.
 President of Rhode Island (White-
 hall, 29 March 1655), 277.
 Capt J. Leverett (Whitehall, 3 April
 1655), 278.
 Colonel A. Cox (Whitehall, 24 April
 1655), 279.

- Cromwell's Letters: (in App. vol. xviii.)
 To Edmund Waller (Whitehall, 13 June 1655), 276.
 Col. H. Brewster (Whitehall, 26 Oct. 1655), 281.
 Vice-Chancellor of Oxford (Whitehall, 3 July 1657), 287.
 Bailiffs of Oswestry (Whitehall, 13 July 1657), 288.
 Mayor of Gloucester (Whitehall, 2 Dec. 1657), 288.
 Col. Cox (Whitehall, 4 Feb. 1657), 289.
 Commanders of Gloucester Militia (Whitehall, 11 March 1657), 291.
 Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge (Whitehall, 28 May 1658), 293.
 The same (Whitehall, 22 June 1658), 292.
- Cromwell's Speeches:
- i Opening of the Little Parliament, 4 July 1653: xvi. 231-262.
 - ii Meeting of the First Protectorate Parliament, 4 Sept. 1654: xvii. 24-47.
 - iii To the same Parliament, 12 Sept. 1654 53-79.
 - iv. Dissolution of the First Protectorate Parliament, 22 Jan. 1654-5: 92-122.
 - v. Meeting of the Second Protectorate Parliament, 17 Sept. 1656: 205-252.
 - vi. To the same, 23 Jan. 1656-7: 268-273.
 - vii. To the same, 31 March 1657: 284-287.
 - viii. To a Committee of the Second Protectorate Parliament, 3 April 1657: 288-291.
 - ix. To the Second Protectorate Parliament in a body, 8 April 1657: 293-296.
 - x. Conference with the Committee of Ninety-nine in regard to the title of King, 11 April 1657: 299-310.
 - xi. Second Conference with the same, 13 April 1657: xviii. 3-22.
 - xii Third Conference with the same, 20 April 1657: 24-32.
 - xiii. Fourth Conference with the same, 21 April 1657: 35-74.
 - xiv. To the Second Protectorate Par-

- Cromwell's Speeches:
 liament in a body, 8 May 1657: 76-79.
 ['xv.' should be] To the Second Protectorate Parliament, 25 May 1657: 284.
- xv. To the same, 9 June 1657, on the presentation of some Bills for assent: 82.
 - xvi To the Two Houses of Parliament; Opening of the Second Session of the Second Protectorate Parliament, 20 Jan. 1657-8: 103-110.
 - xvii. To the same Parliament, the Commons having raised debates as to the Title of the other House, 25 Jan. 1657-8: 114-137.
 - xviii. Dissolution of the Second Protectorate Parliament, 4 Feb. 1658: 139-144.
- Cromwell, what he did, ix. 64; x. 372, 393; xi. 62; his worth in history, 307; his Protectorate, 308-9; dead body hung on the gibbet, 360; xii. 246, his hypochondria, 251, 257; his early marriage and conversion; a quiet farmer, 252; his Ironsides, 254, his Speeches, 259, 277; his 'ambition,' and the like, 262; dismisses the Rump Parliament, 271; Protectorship, and Parliamentary Futilities, 274; his last days, and closing sorrows, 278; his terrible lifelong wrestle, xiii. 24; was by far our remarkablest Governor, 275; Christianity of, xix. 85, 89, 195, his Protestant war, 176; his notion of 'voting,' 292, 296; his Statue, 307; Sterling's feeling about him, xx. 309, 311, what a German Cromwell might have done, xxi. 268; Cromwell and his Puritans, 271, 335, 363; his time, xxiv. 387, his soldiers, xxvi. 234; his worth to England, xxvii. 196; his Ironsides, 401; Cromwell and Attila, xxx. 50.
- Cromwell, Mrs. Elizabeth, letters from Oliver Cromwell to, xvi 59, 142, 151; letter to Oliver Cromwell from, 120; retired to Norborough, 143.
- Cromwell, Elizabeth (sister of Protector), Oliver's letter to, xviii. 252.

- Cromwell, Frances, and Mr. Rich, xvii. 191-194; married, 194; xviii. 98.
- Cromwell, Henry (son of Protector), is of Gray's Inn, xiv. 46; is a captain, 318; in Ireland, xv. 270, xvi. 143; in Little Parliament, 217, 271 n.; in First Parliament, xvii. 23; in Ireland, good conduct of, 141, 142; appointed Lord Deputy, 142; Oliver Cromwell's letters to, 173, 179, 197; Mary, letters to, 177, 192.
- Cromwell, list of his Brothers and Sisters, xiv. 23, of his Uncles and Aunts, 28, 29 n.; of his Children, 70, 71.
- Cromwell, Major, wounded at Bristol, xiv. 238.
- Cromwell, Mary, her letters to Henry, xvii. 177, 192, married, 194; xviii. 99.
- Cromwell, Oliver (son of Protector), Cornet of Horse, xv. 127; death of, 194 n.
- Cromwell, Oliver, *Memoirs of the Protector* by, xv. 294 n.
- Cromwell, Richard, Protector's great-grandfather, xiv. 30-34.
- Cromwell, Richard (son of Protector), character, xiv. 318; married, xv. 112; death of, 136; his Wife, 136; Cromwell's letter to his Wife, 156; Oliver's letters to, 292; xvii. 189; in First Parliament, 23; his estate, 191 n.
- Cromwell, Mrs. Richard, her child, xvi. 11.
- Cromwell, Robert (eldest son of Protector), his death in early manhood, xiv. 49 n.; his father's grief for, 194; xviii. 163.
- Cromwell, Thomas, Earl of Essex, xiv. 26; Oliver related to, 29.
- Cromwells in the Civil War, xiv. 57.
- Cronström, Commandant of Bergen-op-Zoom, xxvi. 220.
- Crook, Capt. Unton, xvii. 88, Cromwell's letter to, 88; pursues Wagstaff and Penruddock, 130.
- Cropredy. See Battle.
- Cross, Cheapside and Charing, destroyed, xiv. 152. See St. Paul's.
- Crossen, xxiii. 177.
- Croydon Races, a quarrel at, xi. 220.
- Croyland relieved, xiv. 147.
- Croze, La, xxiii. 298.
- 'Crucify him!' a considerable feat in the suppression of minorities, xi. 185, 188; xix. 40, 291. See "O'clo'."
- Crusades, the, vii. 329; xiii. 144.
- Cruissol, Marquise de, guillotined, iv. 325.
- Cudworth, Dr., of Cambridge, xvii. 188.
- Cui bono, vi. 391.
- Cuissa, massacred at La Force, iv. 44.
- Culloden, victory of, xxvi. 69.
- Culmbach, Margraf of, xxi. 231; Friedrich founder of the Elder Line, 235; Casimir, a severe, rather truculent Herr, 237; Margraf George and his connexion with the King of Hungary, 238; gets the Duchy of Jägerndorf, 241; noble conduct in the Reformation, 243, at the Diet of Augsburg, 244; few truer specimens of the Honest Man, 248, his Son and Brothers, 248; troubles with Albert Alcibiades, 262; Diagram of the Elder and Younger Culmbach Lines, 388 a. See Friedrich George of.
- Cumberland, Duke of, xxv. 221; at Dettingen, 284, 295; in the Netherlands, xxvi. 56, 224, 225, at Fontenoy, 57; at Culloden, 69; disagreements with the Duke of Newcastle, xxvii. 37, 41; takes command of Britannie Army, 135; to little purpose, 193, 249; aiming to oust the Duke of Newcastle, 194; opposition to Pitt, 200, 202; defeated at Hastenbeck, 261; Convention of Kloster-Zeven, 283; returns home and resigns his military offices, 285; mentioned also, xxv. 383; xxvi. 37, 245, 319.
- Cunningham's *Friedrich's Last Review*, xxx. 254 n.
- Curates abolished, iv. 280.
- Currie's, Dr., *Life of Burns*, vii. 5.
- Cussy, Girondin, retreats to Bordeaux, iv. 220.
- Custine, General, takes Mentz, &c., iv. 82; retreats, 166; blamed, 207, 224; guillotined, 240; his son guillotined, 265.

Custom, the greatest of Weavers, i. 250; reverence for, xiii. 203. See Habit.

Customs and morals, iv. 61.

Custrin, xxi. 294, 343, 345; Friedrich a prisoner at, xxii. 472, 481; Katte's execution, 488; Friedrich's life at, xxiii. 38; a rugged little town, with strong castle, xxviii. 57; town burnt by the Russians, 53, 57-59.

Czarina. See Elizabeth, Catharine.

Çartoryskies, the Polish, xxix. 426, 429, 430.

Łezernichef, General, prisoner at Zorn-dorf, xxviii. 81; with Soltukof in Silesia, xxix. 60, 74; marches on Berlin, 89, 91, 96; with Loudon in Silesia, 197, 217, 224; ordered home by Czar Peter, 266, to join himself with Friedrich, 266; with less advantage than expected, 270; joins with him at Lissa, 291; recalled home, 297; generously stays three days, 298.

Czetteritz, General, taken prisoner, with his copy of Military Instructions, xxviii. 384.

DALBERG, Wolfgang, Heribert von, brief account of, v. 254.

Dalbier, Col., at Basing siege, xiv. 246; account of him, 253; in revolt at Kingston, xv. 15.

Dalegarth Hall, notice of, xv. 115.

D'Alembert, ix. 262.

Dalgetty, Dugald. See Turner, Sir James.

Dalhousie, Cromwell at, xv. 77.

Dalrymple, Major, at Berlin, xxx. 123, 125, 270.

Dalwig, Lieutenant-Colonel, xxix. 125, 216; xxx. 166.

Damas, Colonel Comte de, at Clermont, iii. 218, 219; at Varennes, 225.

Damiens, xxvii. 135.

Dampierre, General, killed, iv. 207.

Dampmartin, Captain, at riot in Rue St. Antoine, ii. 162; on state of the Army, iii. 95; on state of France, 134; at Avignon, 268, on Marseillaise, 337.

Dandoins, Captain, Flight to Varennes, iii. 212-217.

Dandy, mystic significance of the, i. 263; dandy worship, 265; sacred books, 267; articles of faith, 269; a dandy household, 274; tragically undermined by growing drudgery. 275; the genus, xii. 160.

Danes, the, seize Schleswig-Holstein, xxix. 260, 261.

Danger, Scots Committee of, xiv. 325.

Daniel, Col., at Inverkeithing fight. xvi. 157.

Dankelmann, xxi. 57.

Dante, x. 117, 277; xii. 101; biography in his Book and Portrait, 102; his birth, education and early career, 103; love for Beatrice, unhappy marriage, banishment, 103; uncourtier-like ways, 105; death, 106; his Divina Commedia genuinely a song, 108; the Unseen World, as figured in the Christianity of the Middle Ages, 118; 'uses' of Dante, 117; xix. 77; xxi. 133, 149, 152.

Danton, an earthborn, yet honestly born of earth, x. 107; on government, xvii. 52; notice of, u. 170; President of Cordeliers, 294; astir, 310, in. 26; and Marat, 33; served with writs, 33; in Cordeliers Club, 41, elected Councillor, 167; Mira-beau of Sansculottes, 255; takes presents, 278; in Jacobins, 302; for Deposition, 333; of Committee (August Tenth), 345, 352; Minister of Justice, 375; iv. 13; 'faire peur,' 'de l'audace,' 32, after September Massacre, 59; after Jemappes, 107; and Robespierre, 110; in Netherlands, 116; at King's trial, 128; on war, 141; rebukes Marat, 161; peacemaker, 163; 'name be blighted,' 169, and Dumouriez, 174; in Salut Committee, 177; breaks with Girondins, 185; his law of Forty sous, 237, and Revolutionary Government, 287; and Paris Municipality, 288, suspect, 312; retires to Arcis, 313; and Robespierre, 316; arrested, 317; prison-thoughts, 318; trial of, 319-21; guillotined, 322, character. 322.

Dantzig, siege of, xxiii. 203, 225, 269; not to belong to Friedrich, xxx. 60.

Danz, Dr., xxvi. 259.

D'Arget, xxv. 160; saves Valori from Pandours, xxvi. 121; despatched to Friedrich at Dresden, 171, letter to Valori describing his interview with the King, 171-175; taken into Friedrich's service, 175, 189, 278, 290, 350.

Darlington, Countess of, xxii. 85, 205, 485.

Darmstadt, Landgravine of, visits the Czarina with her daughters, xxx. 91, 92. See Ernst Ludwig.

Dashkof Princess, xxx. 281.

Daun, Leopold Graf von, xxv. 270; under Bärenklau at Stockstadt, 385; advances to relief of Prag, xxvii. 175, retreats on hearing of the Prussian victory, 186; order from Vienna to proceed, 211; battle of Kohn, 212; orders retreat, 226; order disobeyed, 226; victory, 227; makes no chase of the Prussians, 228, 238; the first chief of the Order of Maria Theresa, 231, with Prince Karl, following the Prince of Prussia, 254, following Bevern, 365; at Breslau, 378; Leuthen, 388, 404; supersedes Prince Karl, 405; guarding the Bohemian Frontier, xxviii. 26; on march to assist Olmütz, 27; at Leutomischl, 30; sits on his magazine, clear not to fight, 32; Bos against Leo, 32; encamps at Gewitsch, watching Friedrich, 33; gets cautiously on foot again, 35; gets reinforcements into Olmütz, 35; aware of Friedrich's convoys, 38; attack on Mosel, 39-43; siege of Olmütz ended, 44; cautiously follows Friedrich to Königsgratz, 46, to recapture Saxony, while Friedrich is engaged with the Russians, 82, at Zittau, 83; near Meissen, hears of Friedrich's approach, 86; a note sent to Fermor unexpectedly answered, 87; retires to Stolpen, 88; encamps ahead of Friedrich at Kittlitz, 90; surprisal of Friedrich in his camp at Hochkirch, 97; consecrated hat and sword from the Pope for his victory, 111, 159; cannot prevent Friedrich reaching Silesia, 116; tries to get Dresden, 117; wheels homeward, unsuccessful, 120; puzzled at

having to take the offensive, 157; encamps near Mark-Lissa, 158, 164; content to play jackal to the Russian lion, 165; expects always to succeed by help of others, 237, 239; cannot persuade Soltikof to do all his fighting for him, 245-248; determines on siege of Dresden, 256; informs Soltikof of his success, 275; reason to be proud of his cunctatory method, 277; carting endless provisions for self and Soltikof, 278; almost captures Ziethen at Sorau, 282; sits on his magazine at Bautzen, 284; dare not attack Prince Henri, 284; concessions to Soltikof, 285; will attack Prince Henri tomorrow, 292; finds only an empty camp, Prince Henri vanished in unknown space, 293; Prince Henri out-manceuvres him in Saxony, 302, 303, is compelled to retreat on Dresden, 303; going at his slowest step, 314; hears uncomfortably that Finck is at Maxen, but decides to attack, 318; three simultaneous assaults, 322; captures Finck and his whole army, 325; also another outpost of Friedrich's at Meissen, 329; dare not attack Friedrich, 329; contents himself with holding Dresden, 330; Vienna night-caps, in token of his talent for sleep, 331; xxix. 310; in winter-quarters, xxviii. 333; again to have chief command in the new campaign, 332; continues near Dresden, xxix. 5, 12, entrenched and palisaded to the teeth, 12, 17; intercepts Friedrich's march for Silesia, 18-23; arrives to relief of Dresden, 30; safe on his northern side, 31; attends Friedrich's march into Silesia, 55-58; battle of Liegnitz, 61; his beautiful plan all gone to distraction, 70, 71; indolently allows Friedrich to get clear away, 74, 75; and has a troublesome time with him in consequence, 82-84; sends Lacy to join the Russians in seizing Berlin, 89; ordered to maintain Saxony, 103, inexpugnably encamped at Torgau, 105; moves to Eilenberg, 106; returns to Torgau, 107; attacked by

- Friedrich, 118; furious slaughter on both sides, 119-131; thinks the victory his, 126; defeat and swift retreat, 130; at Plauen, 132; his return to Vienna, 133; takes charge of Saxony, 184, 185; attacks Prince Henri's outposts, 236; takes command in Silesia against Friedrich, 289, 290; skilfully defends himself, 293, 294; attacked and defeated by Friedrich at Burkersdorf, 295-303; attempts to break in on Friedrich's siege of Schweidnitz, 307, 308; defeated at Reichenbach, and gives up the enterprise, 310; his fighting all over, 316, 317; dies some three years afterwards, 317: mentioned also, xxx. 18.
- Dauphiness, the, intercedes for Polish Majesties, xxvii. 76.
- David, the Hebrew King, xi. 233; xii. 56; his Psalms, xxiii. 378, xxvii. 298.
- David, Painter, in National Convention, iv. 64; works by, 227, 300, 331; hemlock with Robespierre, 343.
- Davy, John. See Theauro.
- Dawkins, Admiral, a Major-General, xvii. 155 n.
- Dean, Col., at Preston, xv. 31; in Ireland, 211, General, in Scotland, xvi. 158; Major-General, at Worcester battle, 177, in Dutch War, 207.
- Dean, Cornet, Leveller, pardoned, xv. 144.
- Death, nourishment even in, i. 106, 162; kingly idea of, ii. 22; the seal and immortal consecration of Life, vii. 63; viii. 346; Eternity looking through Time, 388; if not always the greatest epoch, yet the most noticeable, ix. 109; eternal, xiii. 286. See Life.
- Debentures of soldiers, xiv. 326.
- Deblin, Cordwainer, works against Browne at Breslau, xxiv. 211; xxvii. 405.
- Debt, xiii. 113; National, sublime invention of, xxviii. 137.
- Declaration, against Army, xiv. 284; expunged, 296; by Cromwell, xv. 50; by Cromwell to the Army in Ireland, 161; by Cromwell to Irish, 239; by Charles Stuart against his Father, xvi. 29; by Lord General and Council of Officers, 227; of Parliament, xiv. 61.
- Deffand, Madame du, xxvi. 207; letter from D'Alembert to, xxix. 376.
- Deficit, Mirabeau on, ii. 299.
- Defoe, vii. 24.
- Degenfeld, xxii. 369; xxiii. 352.
- Deggendorf, xxv. 271.
- Delinquents, Staffordshire, xiv. 268; are searched out, 320; xv. 115; xvi. 208.
- Demkof, General (Thémicoud), with Fermor invading Prussia, xxviii. 55; Zorndorf, 74, 75.
- Democracy, on Bunker Hill, ii. 8; spread of, in France, 55, 56, 148; stern Avatar of, ix. 335; x. 18; true meaning of, 371; Macchiavelli's opinion of, xi. 309; to complete itself, 339, xiii. 260; close of kn to Atheism, 267; walking the streets everywhere, 310; an inevitable fact of the days we live in, xix. 12; *nota* 'Kind of Government,' 18; no Nation that could ever subsist upon, 23; the essence of whatever truth is in it, that the able man be promoted in whatever rank he is found, 144, 158.
- Demon Newswriter, xxvi. 343, 364; his eavesdropping account of Friedrich and his Court, 366-377; identification of, xxviii. 350, 353.
- Demosthenes and Phocion, xi. 321.
- Denbigh, Earl, and Duke Hamilton, xv. 122; in Council of State, 122.
- Dendy, Edward, Sergeant-at-arms, xv. 111.
- Denial and Destruction, vi. 253; vii. 183, 236; ix. 73, 210, 232, 294; change from, to affirmation and reconstruction, viii. 298, 363.
- Denina comes to Berlin, xxx. 210.
- Denis, Madame, xxiv. 227; keeps house for Voltaire, xxvi. 274, 315; an expensive gay lady, 280; joins Voltaire in his Frankfurt troubles, 407, 409, 412. mentioned also, 416.
- Denmark. See Christian II. and IV. of, Friedrich IV. of; Danes.
- Dennington Castle, xiv. 202, 244.

- Departments, France divided into, iii. 14.
- Derby, Earl, routed at Wigan, xvi. 169; taken at Worcester, 181; beheaded, 181.
- Derby House. See Committee.
- Derby, Lord, xi. 356.
- Derschau, xxii. 172, xxiii. 42, 68, 274, 412; continued in office, xxiv. 24.
- Desborow, Captain, at Cambridge, xiv. 134; Major, at Bristol siege, 236; Colonel, at Conference at Speaker's, xvi. 200-203; in Council of State, 271 n.; xvii. 8 n., made Major-General, 131, 155 n.; on Committee of Kingship, 288; against title of King, xviii. 79; one of Cromwell's Lords, 101.
- Deschamps, M., xxiii. 293.
- Descriptive power, ix. 17.
- Desèze, Pleader, for Louis, iv. 120, 131.
- Desfontaines, xxiii. 316; xxv. 248; xxvi. 202.
- Deshuttes, massacred, October Fifth, ii. 348.
- Desilles, Captain, in Nanci, iii. 118.
- Deslons, Captain, at Varennes, iii. 226; would liberate the King, 227.
- Desmoulins, Camille, notice of, ii. 171; in arms at Café de Foy, 217; Editor, his title, 292; on Insurrection of Women, 314; in Cordeliers Club, iii. 41; and Brissot, 302, in National Convention, iv. 63; on Sansculotism, 178; on plots, 193; suspect, 311; for a committee of mercy, 313; ridiculous law of the suspect, 314; his Journal, 314; his wife, 318; trial of, 319-321; guillotined, 322, widow guillotined, 323.
- Despotism reconciled with Freedom, xiii. 346.
- Dessau, xxi. 403. See Leopold of.
- Destiny, didactic, xiii. 45.
- Dettingen, xxii. 451; Battle of, xxiv. 341; xxv. 284, 296.
- Devil, internecine war with the, i. 13, 117, 163, 178; cannot now so much as believe in him, 160; become an emancipated gentleman, xi. 347-8; constant invocation of the, 377; Elect in England, xix. 70; principal function of a, xxvi. 365.
- Deville, to try what he can do on Silesia, xxviii. 82, 84, 89; hurries homewards, 116; makes an unsuccessful dash at Leobschutz, 155; at Landshut, 279; cashiered by Daun, 284.
- D'Ewes, Sir Simonds, High-Sheriff of Suffolk, xi. 142; his immaculate election affidavits, 144; sat spotless for Sudbury, 164; took Notes of the Long Parliament, 164; purged out with some four or five score others, 165; xv. 102; value of his Ms. Notes, xi. 166; notices of Cromwell, xiv. 125: cited, xiv. 111, 137, 208; xv. 90.
- Diamond Necklace, the, x. 3-96; the various histories of those various Diamonds, 13; description of, 16: it changes hands, 69; Diamonds for sale, 77; extraordinary 'Necklace Trial,' 83.
- Dick, Sir William, notice of, xv. 76.
- Dickens, Captain Guy, xxi. 358, 386, 395, 406, 469, 479; xxiii. 22, 78; audiences with King Friedrich, xxiv. 51, 160: cited, 3 n.; xxvi. 221.
- Dickson, Colonel, *not* kicked out, xi. 351.
- Dictatorships, use of, xi. 309-10.
- Diderot, prisoner in Vincennes, iii. 158; ix. 229-308; his Father, 239; education, 240; precarious manner of life, 245, his marriage, 252; general scoundrelism, 254; authorship, 256: his letters, 261; incredible activity, 273; garbled proof-sheets, 274, free open-handed life in Paris, 278; visits Petersburg, 281; death, 284; mental gifts, 285; a proselyting Atheist, 288; utter shamelessness and uncleanness, 296; brilliant talk, 299; literary facility, 300; neither a coward nor in any sense a brave man, 306; visits Russia, xxx. 92.
- Dierecke, Colonel, at Zittau, xxvii. 259; captured at Meissen, xxviii. 329.
- Dieskau, Artillery-General, at Siege of Schweidnitz, xxix. 315.
- Dieskau, Camp of, xxvi. 51, 110.
- Dietrich, Prince, of Anhalt-Dessau, xxv. 151, 160; able soldier-like con-

- duct, 161; at Olischau, 162; xxvi. 11; sent to reinforce his Father, 111: mentioned also, 167 n.; xxvii. 43.
- Dietrichstein, Graf von, xxx. 6.
- Dietzman, the Thüringian Landgraf, xxi. 149.
- Dieulafoi, xxx. 202.
- Digby, Captain, in the attack on Conflans's fleet, xxviii. 343.
- Dilettantes and Pedants, i. 67; patrons of Literature, 124.
- Dilettantism, reign of, ix. 152; xiii. 60, 146, 154, 212; gracefully idle in Mayfair, 188.
- Diligence, honest, xi. 299-301.
- Dilworth, *Life &c. of Frederick*, xxiv. 282, 282 n.
- Dingelangen, burned by Daun, xxv. 269.
- Dinners, defined, ii. 306; English public, xix. 262. See Guards.
- Diogenes, i. 205.
- Diplomacies, Imbroglia of, xxv. 18, 84, 90; huge, xxvi. 28.
- Diplomatists, Devil-, xxii. 255; an undiplomatic reflection, 281, 406; Smelfungus on Modern Diplomacy, 393, heavy-footed diplomacy, xxiii. 356.
- Directorate, feats of, iv. 398.
- Discipline in French Army, nature of, iii. 90-92, value of, xxv. 10.
- Dismal Science, the, xi. 177; Professors of, xix. 52, 182.
- Ditmarsch-Stade Markgraves, xxi. 89.
- Dives, Sir Lewis, notice of, xiv. 231.
- Divine Right of Kings and of Squires, xi. 64; xii. 235.
- Divines, Westminster Assembly of, xiv. 110, 174, 183, 275, 276.
- Divorce, new Sacrament of, xix. 30.
- Dizzy, him they call, xi. 350.
- D'O, Colonel, helplessly loses Glatz, xxix. 35, 36; court-martial, 37.
- Do-nothing, the vulgar, contrasted with the vulgar Drudge, ix. 181.
- Dobryn, Knights of, xxi. 121.
- Dockum, General, xxiii. 29.
- Dodd, Dr., at French races, ii. 61.
- Dodsworth, Captain, character of, xiv. 142.
- Doeg, W. H., xxx. 135 n.
- Dogs, dead, floating in the Westminster region, xix. 242.
- Dohm, cited, xxi. 417 n.; on Friedrich's Excise-system, xxix. 383: mentioned also, xxx. 246.
- Dohna, tacit dusky figure, xxi. 441.
- Dohna, General, succeeds Lehwald in Pommern, xxviii. 13, 29, 47; defends Frankfurt bridge against Fermor, 57; at Gorgast, 59; sudden panic in his troops at Zorndorf, 70, 72; pursues Fermor, 78; marches for Saxony, 118; sent against the Russians, 164, 169; can do nothing on Soltikof, 170; superseded by Wedell, 171, 174.
- Dohna, Graf von, at Vienna, xxv. 391.
- Dolgorucki, Prince, Russian Ambassador at Berlin, xxx. 123.
- Dollar, origin of the word, xxvii. 82.
- Dollart, the, xxvi. 320, 321.
- Doll's shoes, a feat accomplished, xx. 232.
- Dombâle, General, with Zweibrück marching to Saxony, xxviii. 83, 84.
- Dominica, as it is and might be, xi. 357.
- Domstädtl, Pass of, xxviii. 40.
- Donauwörth under ban, xxi. 318.
- Donhof, xxiii. 9, 30.
- Donnel, O', with Daun at Torgau, xxix. 126, 129.
- Doon Hill, Scots Army at, xvi. 35.
- Doppet, General, at Lyons, iv. 272.
- Doring's Gallery of Weimar Authors, vi. 4.
- Dorislaus, Dr., notice of, xiv. 306; xv. 104.
- Dorn, Freytag's clerk, xxvi. 410, 412.
- Dornberg, Minister von, xxx. 191.
- Dorothee, Electress, xxi. 56, 58, 368, 372.
- Donai. See Parlement.
- Double-Marriage, the famous, of Prussia and England, xxii. 79, 98; Treaty cannot be signed, 127; grown plainly hopeless, 190; yet far from dead, 286; reëmerges in an official shape, 241; drawing to an end, 312; England favourable, 336, 357; effulgent flaming-point, 341; as good as extinct, 366; ended, 404; revived, but to no purpose, xxiii. 168.

- Doubt can only be removed by Action, i. 188; withering influence of, vi. 253; the inexhaustible material which Action fashions into Certainty, viii. 356. See Infidelity, Scepticism, Unbelief.
- Douglas, Will, his rhymes on Cromwell, xv. 199.
- Douglas, his *Scotch Peerage* cited, xxv. 220 n.; xxviii. 22 n.
- Downhall, Mr., ejected, xiv. 90, account of, xviii. 176; Cromwell's letter to, 175.
- Downing Street, xix. 107-152; reform in, 111, 128, two kinds of fundamental error, 116; abler Men in, 130, 158, 172; one such indispensable, 135, 145, 281; a small Project of improvement, 137; the New, 155-205; what it might grow to, hard to say, 165; work enough before it, 178, 198.
- Draper, Brigadier-General, xxix. 249 n.
- Drayton, Fen, Warrant to people of, xiv. 132, 134.
- Dresden, Friedrich's Visit to, xxii. 215; fortified against the Prussians, xxv. 395, 398; opens its gates to Friedrich, xxvi. 169; Treaty of, 176, 178, 227; Friedrich again enters and takes possession, xxvii. 61; besieged and partially burnt by the Austrians, xxviii. 119; surrendered by Schmettau, 257-265; capitulation scandalously ill kept, 270-273; furiously besieged by Friedrich, xxix. 26-34; bombardment of, vii. 96.
- Driesen, at Lenthén, xxvii. 396, 397.
- Drill, Soldier, xi. 327; Sergeant, the, 383; unspeakable value of wise drill, 384, 385.
- Drogheda. See Tredah.
- Drouet, Jean B., notice of, iii. 214; discovers Royalty in flight, 216; raises Varennes, 221; blocks the bridge, 222; defends his prize, 225; rewarded, 248; to be in Convention, iv. 28; captured by Austrians, 295.
- Drudgery contrasted with Dandyism, i. 269; 'Communion of Drudges,' and what may come of it, 275.
- Drummer, the Little, xxi. 454.
- Drury Lane, Cromwell lives in, xiv. 271.
- Drusus Germanicus, xxi. 70.
- Dryasdust, the Prussian, xxi. 14; xxii. 347, 363; doing History, xxi. 23, 118, 208, 391; xxvii. 376; Societies, xiv. 4, 5, 9.
- Dryden's cousin, xvi. 271 n.
- Dubarry, Dame, and Louis XV., ii. 2, 4; flight of, 26; imprisoned, iv. 259; her foul day done, x. 17.
- Dublin, Cromwell in, xv. 158; Cromwell's letter to Commissioners at, 282.
- Dubois-Crance, bombards Lyons, iv. 234, takes it, 270.
- Dubois, Cardinal, xxi. 92, ugliest of created souls, 117; xxiii. 307.
- Dubois killed at Kloster Kampen, xxix. 139 n.
- Dubourgay, xxii. 206, 225, 279, 313, 329; Correspondence about the Double-Marriage, 242, 284, 307; proves Grumkow's treachery, 318; arrival of Hotham, 337, conversation with the King of Prussia, 338.
- Duchâtel votes wrapt in blankets, iv. 130; at Caen, 206.
- Duchesne. See Père.
- Ducos, Girondin, iii. 256.
- Duelling, a picture of, i. 174; in French Revolution, iii. 143; viii. 237; xi. 213.
- Dugdale, Lieutenant, xxx. 30.
- Dugommier, General, at Toulon, iv. 272, 294.
- Duhamel, killed by Marseillaise, iii. 351.
- Duhan de Jandun, xxi. 453; xxii. 15, 57, 62, 476; King Friedrich's thoughtfulness for, xxiv. 22; xxvi. 180.
- Duke of Trumps, the, and his domestic service, xi. 189.
- Duke, no one in England so well lodged and tended as our prisoner-scoundrels, xix. 69; Ducal Costermongers, 204.
- Dukinfield, Governor of Chester, xv. 11.
- Dulaure, cited, xxv. 383 n.
- Dumb busy generations, xxi. 400, 407, 423.
- Dumont's *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, x. 111; ii. 300, iii. 173.

- Dumoulin, Colonel, xxii. 458, 463.
- Dumoulin, in Silesia, xxvi. 78, 81, 83; Hohenfriedberg, 86; follows the Austrians into Bohemia, 100.
- Dumouriez, notice by, i. 3; account of him, iii. 26; in Brittany, 192; in dressing-gown at Nantes, 207; in La Vendée, 272; sent for to Paris, 290; Foreign Minister, 304, dismissed, to Army, 316; disobeys Luckner, 334; Commander-in-Chief, 378; his army, iv. 26; Council of War, 29; seizes Argonne Forest, 29, 65; Grand-Pré, 67; and mutineers, 68; and Marat in Paris, 81; to Netherlands, 82; at Jemappes, 106; in Paris, 126; discontented, 140; retreats, 165; traitor? 166, 174; beaten, 174; will join the enemy, 180; arrests his arresters, 182; escapes to Austrians, 183; at Bilitz, xxix. 441.
- Dunbar town described, xvi. 34; Cromwell at, 15, 24, 33, 34; battle of, 41-44; prisoners, sufferings of, xvi. 57 n.; xviii. 239, 240; in New England, xvi. 198. See Battle.
- Duncannon, ships taken at, xv. 215.
- Dunch of Pusey, John, collector of letters, xv. 112; marries Ann Mayor, xvi. 164; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23; Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 87.
- Duncon's, Samuel, election affidavits, xi. 147.
- Dundalk, Governor of, Cromwell's letter to, xv. 170.
- Dundas, Governor Walter, letter to General Whalley, xvi. 66; letters to, from Cromwell, 67, 71, 103, 104, 106, 108, 110, 111; his letters to Cromwell, 69, 104, 105, 107, 110, 111.
- Dundee stormed by General Monk, xvi. 184.
- Dunkirk taken, xviii. 96, 148; xxv. 219; Louis XV. at, 388.
- Dunn, the Rev. Mr., xx. 158.
- Dunse, Scotch Encampment on the Hill of, xi. 42; Law, Scots Army at, xiv. 104.
- Duperret, Girondin, draws sword in Convention, iv. 186; papers sealed, Charlotte Corday, 222.
- Dupes and Impostors, x. 363 Dupes and Quacks, xiii. 33; a kind of *inverse* cheats, xix. 15.
- Dupont, Deputy, Atheist, iv. 123.
- Duport, Adrien, in Paris Parlement, ii. 101; in Constituent Assembly, one of a trio, 274; law-reformer, iii. 11.
- Duportail, in office, iii. 154.
- Duquesne, M., xxvi. 434, 438.
- Duquesne Fort, xxviii. 122.
- Duren, Van, Printer of *Anti-Macchia-vel*, xxiv. 56; and Voltaire at Frankfurt, xxvi. 408.
- Durham College, xvi. 137-140.
- Duringshofen, Colonel, Battalion captured at Griefenberg, xxviii. 156.
- Durosoy, Royalist, guillotined, iv. 14.
- Dusaulx, M., on taking of Bastille, ii. 259; notice of, iv. 51; will demit, 199.
- Dusseldorf, xxi. 313; xxii. 456; a dinner-scene at, xxi. 325.
- Dutch War, xvi. 207, 220; Treaty, xvii. 11.
- Dutch, the, disinclined to join in the Austrian-Succession War, xxiv. 351; torpid response to his Britannic Majesty's enthusiasm, xxv. 6, 219, 254; Carteret, strongly pulleying, succeeds in raising them, 275; Republic, end of the, xxvi. 217; Revolt, the world-famous, xxi. 316, 327, 331; Dutch Traders and Karl VI., xxii. 111.
- Dutertre, in office, iii. 154.
- Dutton, Sir Thomas, and Sir Hatton Cheek, xi. 222.
- Duty, no longer a divine Messenger and Guide, but a false earthly Fantasm, i. 157, 159; infinite nature of, 188; ix. 79; x. 236, duty made easy, ix. 306; xii. 36, 75, 88, 114; xiii. 137, 145; sceptical spiritual paralysis, xii. 202.
- Duvernoy, Biographer of Voltaire, xxvi. 176, 278, 290: cited, xxiii. 308 n.; xxv. 266 n.; xxvi. 276 n.; xxx. 153 n.
- EARLE, Sir Walter, sent to Charles I., xiv. 265.
- Ebert, cited, xxix. 154 n.
- Eckart, Prussian Finance Minister, dismissed, xxiv. 33.

- Economics, necessity of, xiii. 113; national, xxi. 413, 425. See Thrift.
- Edda, the Scandinavian, xii. 20.
- Edelsheim, Herr von, xxviii. 358, 363; xxix. 6.
- Edelstern*. See Boner.
- Eden-House Correspondence, xxx. 125 n, 129 n.
- Edgehill. See Battle.
- Edgeworth, Abbé, attends Louis, iv. 135, at his execution, 138.
- Edgeworth, Frank, account of, xx. 160.
- Edinburgh, riot in, xiv. 97; Cromwell in, xv. 72, 76; Scots Army near, xvi. 19, 31, 32; Ministers and Cromwell, 65-80, 85, Castle besieged, 85, 102-114; High Church, Cromwell in, 85; Castle surrenders, 111-114.
- Editor's first acquaintance with Teufelsdröckh, and his Philosophy of Clothes, i. 7; efforts to make known his discovery to British readers, 9; admitted into the Teufelsdröckh watch-tower, 19, 31; first feels the pressure of his task, 49; his bulky Weissnichtwo Packet, 72, strenuous efforts to evolve some historic order out of such interminable documentary confusion, 76; partial success, 88, 100, 150, mysterious hints, 194, 227; astonishment and hesitation, 240; congratulations, 259; farewell, 282.
- Editor's, the, purpose to himself full of hope, xiii. 46; his stipulated work, 331; interest in Friedrich, xxi. 16, 18; difficulties, xxiv. 39, 340; xxv. 220; early recollections, xxvi. 187; note of 1868 on 'A Day with Friedrich,' xxx. 274.
- Editors in 1789, ii. 291.
- Edmund, St., xiii. 65; on the rim of the horizon, 136; opening the Shrine of, 148.
- Edmundsbury, St., xiii. 60.
- Education, influence of early, i. 94; insignificant portion depending on Schools, 101; educational Architects, 105; the inspired Thinker, 221; real and so-called, ix. 184; x. 410, 415; how young souls are trained to *live on poison*, xi. 93; frightful waste of faculty and labour, 233; Service, an effective, possible, xiii. 328; Minister of, xix. 179, 201; modern education all gone to tongue, 209; how it was in the old healthy times, 214; mainly trusted with the Clergy at present, xx. 162; Sterling's opinion on, 229; the boy Friedrich's, xxii. 17; his father's notion of, 18, 56, 66, 75, 131; influences of Nature, 34; teaching Religion, 61; Mother-wit squandered for long-eared erudition, 175.
- Edward I. of England, xxi. 144.
- Edward II., xxi. 156.
- Edward III., xxi. 163.
- Egalité, Philippe, x. 58. See Orléans, Duke d'.
- Eginhart and Emma, xxv. 288.
- Eglantine, Fabre d', in National Convention, iv. 63; assists in New Calendar, 229; imprisoned, 312.
- Ehrenbreitstein, xxi. 453.
- Elchel, Prussian Secretary of State, xxiv. 34, 136, 305; xxv. 336; xxvi. 52; captured by Nadasti, 134; at Dresden, 172; at Potsdam, 368, 370, sends keys to Dresden, 445; Prince Henri writes to, complaining of the King, xxix. 254, 255; he consults with Nussler about his ruined district, 363.
- Eichsted, Franz von, xxi. 219.
- Eighteenth Century, the, prosaic, vii. 8, 63; in it all the elements of the French Revolution, 187, 238; ix. 231, 260; x. 146, an era of Cant, ix. 38; Hypocrisy and Atheism dividing the world between them, 72, 287; x. 381; Industrial victories of, 397; the sceptical, xii. 201-209, 247; the fraudulent, and its suicidal end, xxi. 11; heroism in the, xxiv. 38.
- Emsiedel, General, has charge of Prag, xxv. 410, 433; to quit Prag for Sillesia, 435; his perilous retreat, 436; Hochwald, the hardest brush of all, 438; passes through Saxon territory, his last march, 440.
- Elbe River, rise of the, xxvi. 122, 124; passes through Saxon Switzerland, xxvii. 68.
- Elbingerode, Belleisle arrested at, xxvi. 20.

- Elcheset, *Sieur d'*, xxvii. 281.
- Electing and electioneering, the meaning of, xix. 131, 282.
- Election for States-General, ii. 152.
- Election, the one important social act, xiii. 94, electoral winnowing-machines, 98, 106.
- Election*, the, a mock-heroic poem by Sterling, xx. 250; description; portrait of Mogg; a pretty picture, 267.
- Electors. See Kurfürsts.
- Eleven Members, the. See Members.
- Elie, Capt., at siege of Bastille, ii. 238, 241; after victory, 242.
- Eliot, Sir John, motion by, xiv. 61; dies in the Tower, 67.
- Elizabeth, Princess, flight to Varennes, iii. 202; August 10th, 366; in Temple prison, iv. 102; guillotined, 325.
- Elizabeth, Queen of England, v. 181; tuned the pulpit, xiv. 66; xxi. 260.
- Elizabeth Christina, Empress, xxii. 102; xxiii. 87, 156, xxiv. 139.
- Elizabeth Christina, of Brunswick-Bevern, xxiii. 85, 93; chosen for Friedrich, 95; what he thought of her, 100, 103, 105, 112, 164, 183; her Betrothal, 110; Wedding, 186; grand entrance into Berlin; Wilhelmina's Portrait of her, 189; her honest guileless heart, 190, happy days at Reinsberg, 282, 287, 400, Friedrich's gradual estrangement, xxiv. 32; xxv. 213, 216; Demon Newswriter's account of, xxvi. 375; visited by Friedrich, xxix. 343, xxx. 213, 214. mentioned also, 266, 270.
- Elizabeth, Czarina, xxiv. 258, 262; chooses a successor to the Swedish King, xxv. 350; on good terms with Friedrich, 351, 354; takes offence at Friedrich, xxiv. 261; xxvi. 35; takes part with Saxony, 157; increasing ill-will to Friedrich, 224, 243, 317 n.; in secret treaty with Austria, xxvii. 5, 10; worked upon with cunningly-devised fabrications, 12-15; will not be reconciled to Friedrich, 27; Hanbury Williams's account of her, 28, 29; takes possession of East-Prussen, xxviii. 7, 8; fixed enmity to Friedrich, 131, 132; signs peace-proposals, which end in nothing, xxix. 171; her death, 258; makes her nephew Peter heir, 261; Catherine's respect for her, 264, lying in state, 277; funeral, 279.
- Elizabeth Farnese, Queen of Spain, xxii. 53; her quarrel with Karl VI., 105, 113, 119, 250; the little Spanish Infanta sent back from France, 119; Siege of Gibraltar, 195, 236 n.; league with France, xxiii. 209; West Indian procedures, 373. See Terma-gant of Spain.
- Elizabeth Frederike Sophie marries the Duke of Wurtemberg, xxvi. 237; finds it impossible to live with him, 238; visits Voltaire at Ferney, xxx. 84-88; beautiful and unfortunate, 89.
- Elizabeth, first wife of Crown-Prince of Prussia, chases a custom-house officer, xxix. 385; her marriage and divorce, 384-388.
- Elizabeth of Russia, xxii. 234.
- Elizabeth, Saint, xxi. 122, 125.
- Elizabeth, wife of Joachim I., xxi. 276; Protestantism, and escape to Lichtenberg, 278; visits Luther, 280.
- Elizabethan Era, x. 396; xii. 119.
- Eller, Dr., Chemist, xxiii. 413, xxv. 334; xxvii. 183.
- Elliott, at Emsdorf, xxix. 43.
- Elliott, Excellency Hugh, at Berlin, xxx. 122; letter about Friedrich, 124; commits a surprising piece of burglary, 128, 129; few men with less appetite for such a job, 131.
- Eloquence, long-eared, how to acquire the gift of, ix. 362; unperformed, a cure for, xix. 220.
- Elphinstone, Captain, in the Russian-Turk War, xxx. 30; takes his tea in the Dardanelles, and throws up his command, 31.
- Elsner's preaching, xxvi. 54.
- Elton, Mr., builds ships for Nadir Shah, xxvi. 265.
- Ely, scene in Cathedral of, xiv. 184; fortified, 198; Charity, xviii. 177, 178, Commission of peace in, 204; stave of the Monks at, xxi. 77.
- Emanuel, Prince of Portugal, xxiii. 199.
- Emblems, all visible things, i. 70.
- Emigrants, law against, iii. 161 (see

Coblentz); errors of, 286; regiment of, 466; retreat with Prussians, 79. Emigration, i. 223; first French, ii. 250, 286; second, 355; iii. 132, 235; necessary, viii. 372; x. 418, xiii. 329. Emilie. See Madame du Châtelet. Empson, Lieut., in Scotland, rescues General Lambert, xvi. 17; character and promotion, 117, 119. Emsdorf, Fight of, xxx. 43. Enceladus betrayed into sudden sneezing, xi. 184. Endorf, Johann von, xxi. 162. Enfranchisement, and what it has led to, xi. 192; xix. 30, 50. See Free Men. Engagers, the, xv. 58. England declares war on France, iv. 141, 167; gains Toulon, 233; condition of, question, x. 325, 335; England guilty towards Ireland, 346, 348; Eras of England, 385-401; whose the proprietorship of England, 389; two tasks assigned, 390; education of, 415; over-population, 418; her History worthy of study, xi. 306-315; piety in, 363; History of, an Iliad, or even almost a kind of Bible, 367; needs to be rebuilt once every seventy years, 375; 'prestige' of, on the Continent, 377; full of wealth, yet dying of inanition, xiii. 3; the guidance of, not wise enough, 34, 335, England of the year '1200,' 57, 62, 79, 139, 303; disappearance of our English forests, 122; thus England, the practical summary of English Heroism, 165; now nearly eaten up by puffery and unfaithfulness, 180; real Hell of the English, 182; of all Nations, the stupidest in speech, the wisest in action, 197, 211; unspoken sadness, 200; conservatism, 203; Berserkir rage, 205; a Future, wide as the world, if we have heart and heroism for it, 330; in 1642, xiv. 126; deluded by Cant, xvi. 192; under Cromwell, xvii. 195; and her unattainable 'Model Constitution,' xix. 36; called 'a second time' to show the Nations how to live, 38; still contains many *Kings*, 38, 163; how the Devil provides for his own in England, 70; English

veracity, fidelity, 76; what England wants, 113, 132, 178; and does *not* want, 121, 195; a strange feeling to be at the apex of English affairs, 147; England with the largest mass of real living interests ever intrusted to a Nation, 164; means to keep her Colonies a while yet, 181, 184; Englishmen dare not believe the truth, 193; English careers to born genius, 224; England's hope in her younger sons, 256; no longer an earnest Nation, 273, 276; time of accounts fast arriving, 335; English Peerages once authentically real, 340; the English *ramadhan*, 355; poor scantling of 'divine convictions,' 378; the History of England, the record of Divine Appearances among us, 389; our restless gnawing ennui, the painful cry of an imprisoned heroism, not always to be imprisoned, 401. See British Nation.

English genius, xiv. 7; xviii. 172; character of, xiv. 7, 59, 60, 67, 120; manful style of, xx. 41; stoical pocourantism, 156; wise chiefly by instinct, 290.

English Volunteers at the Siege of Julich, xxi. 321; English treatment of the great Marlborough, 381; xxii. 100; how England got drilled into human order, xxi. 423; England and George I., xxii. 82, 203; first triumph of the 'Constitutional Principle,' 86, 204; English self-complacence, 90; Parliaments, 165, 169, 355; an English Change of Ministry, 336; English influence on Voltaire, xxiii. 310, English thick-skin penetrated, 375, 403.

English-Spanish War, merits of the, xxiv. 124, 286, 338, 343, 401; English Army and English Navy, 125; English share in the Austrian-Succession War, 340; xxv. 12; English Parliament under Walpole, 382; real cause of the War with Spain, 387; English toughness, 398; xxv. 290, 294; tragic stupidity, xxiv. 399; what became of the Spanish War, 401; xxv. 8, 12; a Disciplined England, 9; England with a George II.

- for Chief Captain, 37, 339; "Perfidious Albion," 234, 305.
- English indignation against Friedrich, xxv. 396; xxvi. 426; their dull fire of deliriums, xxv. 420; their mad method of fighting, xxvi. 68; quarrel with Spain, 227; Privateer controversy with Friedrich, 323, 423, 428; freedom of the Ocean Highway, 430; no preparation for war, xxvii. 21, 36-38; Prussian-English Neutrality Convention, 26, 27; relation to Hanover, 30; French-English War, 36; English treaties with Prussia, 136, 137; Government imbecility, 193; hour of tide for England, 196; joy at news of Rossbach and Leuthen, 351, 407-409; four subsidies, xxviii. 14-17; enthusiasm about Friedrich, 16, 18; troops to join Ferdinand, 123; National Debt, 137; French invasion preparing, 179, damaged by Rodney at Havre, 180; by Boscawen off Cadiz, 255, 256; capture of Quebec, 303, 304; America to be English and not French, 309; England lucky to have a King, though a temporary, in Pitt, 310; victory in India, 312; Conflans's fleet and the French Invasion-scheme utterly spoiled by Hawke, 341-345; English soldiers under Duke Ferdinand, xxix. 206, 207; love for their horses, 206; war with Spain, and its results, 245-248, 322; liberty of the seas; English America, universal uproar of "Unexampl'd Prosperities," 341; the Constitutional system, xxx. 126.
- Ennisecorthy Castle taken, xv. 185; surprised, 260.
- Ennui, xix. 401.
- Enraged Club, the, ii. 146.
- Ense's, Varnhagen von, *Memoirs*, x. 289-322; his peculiar qualifications, 293; visit to Jean Paul, 295; fighting at Wagram, 301; his experiences at the Court of Napoleon, 304; Rahel, his Wife, a kind of spiritual queen in Germany, 309; her letters, 312; brilliant talk, 314; death, 318.
- Envy, a putrid corruption of sympathy, ix. 114.
- Epaminondas, xxvii. 385.
- Ephraim, a Berlin Jew, xxvi. 296, 297, 301, coins base money for Friedrich, xxviii. 140, 141; xxix. 96, 147.
- Epic Poems, xxi. 22.
- Epics, modern, v. 140; the old, *believed Histories*, ix. 9; the true Epic of our Time, 206.
- Episcopacy in danger, xiv. 122. See Church-government.
- Epoch, a bewildered, xx. 45, 129.
- Equality (see Liberty), reign of, iv. 15; of men, xi. 342.
- Era, a New, began with Goethe, viii. 388, 393, ix. 164. See Spiritual.
- Erasmus, vi. 35; his ape, xiv. 121.
- Erasmus Reinhold, xxi. 261.
- Erfurt, xxi. 123; entered by General Oldenburg, xxvii. 191.
- Erfurth, Menzel's brother-in-law, xxvi. 445, 446.
- Erlach, Major-General, xxx. 240, 242.
- Erlangen, xxi. 110; xxiii. 135.
- Erman, cited, xxi. 38 n., 54 n., 360 n.; xxvi. 391 n.
- Ernest the Pious, xxvii. 290.
- Ernesti, Professor, xxix. 151.
- Ernestine Line of Saxon Princes, xi. 269, 277; in its disintegrated state, 235.
- Ernst August. See Bishop of Osnabrück.
- Ernst, Elector, xxi. 33, 61, 97.
- Ernst Ludwig of Darmstadt, xxii. 449; addicted to 'ivory-turning,' 450.
- Error, and how to confute it, vii. 252.
- Erthorn, Van, of Embden, xxviii. 18; complaint to Friedrich against him, 18, 19.
- Escuyer, Patriot l', at Avignon, iii. 266.
- Esmonds, the, seat of, xv. 184.
- Espagnac, Biographer of Comte de Saxe, &c., cited, xxii. 231 n.; xxv. 67 n., 389 n.
- Espréménil, Duval d', notice of, ii. 101; patriot, speaker in Paris Parliament, 103, 107; with crucifix, 118; discovers Brienne's plot, 122; arrest and speech of, 124-127; turncoat, 181; in Constituent Assembly, 273; beaten by populace, iii. 164; guillotined, iv. 324; his widow guillotined, 334.
- Essen, General Von, xxix. 441.

- Essex, Henry Earl of, xiii. 134, 281.
 Essex, Earl, General of Parliament Army, xiv. 127; is discontented, 152; relieves Gloucester, 169; is defeated in Cornwall in 1644, 201; is pensioned and dies, 207; funeral of, 271.
 Essex, Earl of, has many Hanbury papers, xxvi. 247 n.
 Estaing, Count d', notice of, ii. 304; National Colonel, 325, 330; Royalist, 334; at Queen's trial, iv. 242.
 Estate, Third, in 1614, ii. 146; what it is in 1788, and will do, 147, 149; deputies to (1789), 179 (see States-General); a separate order? 190; inertia, 191; declares itself 'National Assembly,' 198; Fourth, of Editors, &c. ii. 291.
 Esterhazy, Prince, at Presburg, xxv. 31; in Berlin, xxix. 95.
 Estoc, L', returns from Siberia, xxix. 274.
 Estrées, d', Maréchal, invades Prussia, xxvii. 184; something of a soldier, 193, 248; battle of Hastenbeck, 261, 262; superseded by Rachelieu, 269, 283; profligate condition of his army, 354, 355; with Soubise in his final Campaign, xxix. 304; Cannonade of Amónenburg, 318, 319.
 Etampes. See Simoneau.
 Etat, Tiers. See Estate, Third.
 Eternal Melodies and grinding Discords, xx. 110.
 Eternity looking through Time, i. 20, 71, 216.
 Etiquette, acme of. See Brézé.
 Etoile, beginning of Federation at, iii. 54.
 Etons and Oxfords, with their broken crumbs of mere *speech*, xix. 201, 254.
 Etruscan pottery, xi. 375.
 Ettlingen, Lines of, xxiii. 222.
 Eugene, xxi. 31, 377, 405; xxiii. 169, 173; a bright little soul, growing very old and snuffy, xxii. 110; his crowning feat, 448 n.; receives Friedrich Wilhelm, xxiii. 155, 157; his Rhine Campaign, 215, 223, 240, 250; Friedrich's respect for him, xxx. 225.
 Euler, xxiv. 29; Curator of the Berlin Academy, xxvi. 384.
 Eure, Lord, one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
 Europe, like a set of parishes, x. 254; modern revolutionary, 362; overcrowded, 422. See Commonweal, Feudal.
 European explosions of '1848,' xix. 8; wars since Cromwell, 176; modern luxurious Europe, 393.
 Evangelical Union, xxi. 316, 322, 335, 338; xxiii. 123.
 Evelyn of Wilts, Sir John, in Derby-House Committee, xiv. 317.
 Everard, Leveller, xv. 138.
 Eversmann, xxiii. 19.
 Evil, origin of, i. 182, nature of, ii. 44; speculations on the origin of, viii. 356; evil, in the widest sense of the word, 359; manfully fronted, x. 410; no evil ever wrought its own cure, xix. 158. See Badness, Right and Wrong.
 Ewer, Col., takes Chepstow Castle, xv. 4; presents Army Remonstrance, 92; succeeds Col. Hammond, 101; at Tredah, 178; at Kilkenny, 274, 276, 286.
 Exchange, Royal, has been twice burned, xiv. 92.
 Exeter, Bishop of, resemblance between the, and the Archbishop of Tuam, xx. 206.
 Exeter-Hall, twaddle, xi. 123, 173; xix. 88, 85; and its Puritan mummies, xx. 312.
 Exilles, Chevalier Belleisle perishes at, xxvi. 219.
 Experience, xiii. 361.
 Eye-service, xix. 254.
 Eyes and Spectacles, i. 67.
 Eylert, cited, xxx. 215.
 Eyre, Governor, rabid persecution of, xi. 352.
 FABLES, Four, vi. 392; the fourteenth century an age of Fable, viii. 245.
 Fabrice, xxii. 202, 206; xxiii. 313.
 Fact, the smallest historical, contrasted with the grandest fictitious event, ix. 14, 43; and Semblance, xiii. 17; and Fiction, 59; inexorable nature of, xxi. 18; xxii. 72, 482; the one asbestos which sur-

- vives all fire, xxi. 20; xxiii. 173. See Reality.
- Facts, engraved Hieroglyphs, for which the fewest have the key, i. 194.
- Fairfax, Lord, in Yorkshire, xiv. 141; victory by, 153; beaten, 167; besieged in Hull, 175; death of, xv. 11.
- Fairfax, Sir Thomas, serves under Earl Manchester, xiv. 180; General of New Model Army, 206 n; interview with Clubmen, 227; at Bath, 263; adheres to Commons, 266; meets the King, 273; Governor of Hull, 308; in Kent, xv. 10; becomes Lord Fairfax, 11; at trial of Charles I., 105; of Council of State, 111; half Presbyterian, 230; refuses to fight the Scots, xvi. 6; gives up his Commission, 6; in Church Commission, xvii. 10; in Cromwell's First Parliament, 23; Cromwell's letters to, xiv. 208, 216, 229, 242, 251, 262, 264, 268, 272, 276, 279, 305, 307, 321; xv. 11, 52, 71, 91; xviii. 195.
- Faith, the one thing needful, i. 156. See Believing.
- Falkland, Lord, killed, xiv. 170.
- Falmouth, Sterling at, xx. 244, 256.
- Falsehood, doom of, ii. 265; living under, xxi. 271.
- Fame, no test of merit, vi. 242, the fantastic article so called, ix. 84; the thing called, xiii. 161, 166; xx. 5, 51. See Popularity, Posterity.
- Family-likenesses between Sterling and his parents, xx. 15; contrasts and concordances, 126, 191, 291.
- Famine, in France, ii. 42, 65; in 1788-1792, 133, 195, 210, 278, 288; Louis and Assembly try to relieve, 337; iii. 139, 300 (see Bakers); in 1782, and remedy, iv. 100; remedy by maximum, &c., 178; in Ireland, xv. 208.
- Fanaticism and Formula, ii. 264.
- Fantasy, the true Heaven-gate or Hell-gate of man, i. 140, 213.
- Farley mansion, xvi. 209.
- Fasch, Musician, with the King at Leipzig, xxix. 150.
- Fashionable Novels, i. 267.
- Fassmann, xxii. 135, 185, 228 n., 247, 262, 301, 373; xxiii. 47, 132: cited, xxi. 481 n.; xxii. 228 n.; xxiv. 66.
- Fast, Monthly, xvi. 249 n.
- Fate, different ideas of, vii. 154; of Sophocles, xi. 232.
- Fatherhood, i. 85. See Altar.
- Fauchet, Abbé, at siege of Bastille, ii. 238; famous for Te-Deums, 288; iii. 81; his Cercle Social, 137; in First Parliament, 255; motion by, 270; strips off his insignia, 296; King's death, lamentation, iv. 140; will demit, 199; trial of, 246.
- Fauconberg, Lord, marries Mary Cromwell, xvii. 194; xviii. 99; character of, 99; his letter on Cromwell's death, 171.
- Fault, what we mean by a, vi. 294; his faults not the criterion of any man, xii. 56.
- Faussigny, sabre in hand, iii. 142.
- Faust, Goethe's, emphatically a work of Art, vi. 178; the story a Christian mythus, 180; several attempts to body it forth, 181; Goethe's success, 182; his conception of Mephistophelles, 183; of Faust himself, 184; of Margaret, 190; the original legend, viii. 252; like a death-song of departing worlds, ix. 160.
- Favart, M., Saxe's Theatre-Director and his wife, xxvi. 232, 233.
- Favras, Chevalier, executed, iii. 19.
- Fawkener, Sir Edward, xxiii. 311.
- Fawley Park for sale, xvii. 13.
- Feak, Anabaptist, against Cromwell, xvii. 4.
- Feast of Reason, iv. 280-4; of Etre Suprême, 331, 332.
- Feder, cited, xxii. 271 n.
- Federation, becoming general, iii. 56; of Champ-de-Mars, 60; deputies to, 62, 73; human species at, 64; ceremonies of, 76-82; a new, to be (1792), 331; is held, 339.
- Feebleness, the true misery, i. 159.
- Fehrbellin, Battle of, xxi. 361; xxx. 277, 297; Friedrich visits, 281; the Prussian Bannockburn, 297.
- Fell, Dr., at Oxford, xvi. 131.
- Felsted Free-School, xiv. 48, 102.
- Felton, John, his character and death, xiv. 64.

- Fénelon, xxv. 7, 67.
 Fens, draining of the, xiv. 98; drained, xvi. 226.
 Fenton, Sir William, Commissioner at Cork, xv. 218, 225.
 Fenwick, Col., besieges Hume Castle, xvi. 116.
 Feoffees, purchases by, xiv. 53; prosecuted by Laud, 54, suppressed, 74; losses of, 92.
 Féraud, in National Convention, iy. 63; massacred there, 382.
 Ferbers, Hofrath, xxvi. 444.
 Ferdinand I., Kaiser, Settlement by, xxiv. 354.
 Ferdinand, Prince, of Brunswick, xxv. 216, 330, 355; at Nahorzan (singular interview), xxvi. 104; Sohr, 132; collecting his troops at Halle; letters from the King, xxvii. 53-55; at Leipzig, 59; Cotta, 62; on the Bohemian frontier, 74, 79; at Prag, 171, 236; in retreat, 237, 241; with the King, 263; march to Erfurt, 280; to Madgeburg, 295; to be General of Britannie Army, 324, 325; Rossbach, 326, 331; gets his Britannic Commission, 350; vigorous speed upon the French, 350, 353; every feather of them over the Rhine, xxviii. 21; congratulations from Friedrich, 23; across the Rhine, after the French, 35; beats Clermont at Crefeld, 48; re-crosses the Rhine, 123; sends a detachment to clear Erfurt, 146; Battle of Bergen; cannot get Frankfurt, 149-151; recommends Guichard to Friedrich, 163; battle of Minden, and defeat of Contades, 189-198; sends the Hereditary Prince with 12,000 to aid Friedrich, 332; very busy on the French, 334; has a difficult Campaign against Broglio's superior forces, xxix. 42-46; Korbach, 43; Emsdorf, 43; Warburg, 44; Kloster Kampen, 137-141; successfully defends Hanover, 141; determines to have a sudden stroke at Broglio, 165; Langensalza, Cassel, 166; defeats Broglio at Vellinghausen, 200-5; difficulties with his English troops, 206, 207; beats Soubise at Wilhelms-
 thal, 303, 304; drives the French from their strongholds, 318, Cannonade of Amoneburg, and end of the war, 318-321; visits Westphalia with Friedrich, 365; estranged from Potsdam, xxx. 107; mentioned also, xxvi. 95, 145, 319; xxviii. 167.
 Ferdinand II., Kaiser, xxi. 320 n., 335; high-handed proceedings against the Protestants, 338; all Europe to be converted to Orthodoxy, 341; his Restitution-Edict, 344; seizes Jägerndorf, 349.
 Ferdinand III., Kaiser, xxi. 320 n.
 Ferdinand VI. of Spain, xxvi. 228; xxviii. 375.
 Ferdinand King of the Romans, xxi. 291.
 Ferdinand, Prince, of Prussia, xxvi. 237, 377; xxvii. 207; at Leuthen, 395; at Breslau, xxvii. 4; ill at Berlin, 287-290; xxix. 42: mentioned also, 387.
 Ferguson on Roman History, xi. 305.
 Fernor succeeds Apraxin, and takes possession of East Preussen, xxviii. 7; wending towards Brandenburg, 35; at Konitz, 47; Posen, 48; red-hot savagery on Cüstrin, 53, 59; cannot get Cüstrin Castle, 58; prepares hastily for Prussian attack, 65; battle of Zorndorf, 65-78; retires towards Königsberg, 79, 80; again invades Prussia, under Soltikof, 168; succeeds Soltikof, and marches on Berlin, xxix. 89; with Romanzow at Colberg, 215.
 Ferral, Lieut.-Gen., attacks Passage, xv. 227.
 Ferrand, cited, xxix. 402.
 Ferrar's, Nicholas, establishment, xiv. 73.
 Fersen, Count, iii. 196; gets berline built, 197; acts coachman (King's flight), 190-202
 Festitz and his Tolpatches, xxv. 243, 256, 258.
 Fethard Town, described, xv. 262.
 Fetishes, reckoned respectable, xix. 335, 360.
 Feudal Europe, old, fallen a-dozing to die, ix. 335.
 Feudalism, death of, in France, ii. 167.

- Feuillans Club, iii. 42, 234; denounce Jacobins, 246; decline, 299; extinguished, 299; Battalion, 315; Justices and Patriotism, 330; Directory, 331.
- Fichte's notion of the Literary Man, vi. 69; xii. 185; his Philosophy, vi. 90; vii. 276.
- Fiction, and its kinship to lying, ix. 9; xi. 366; xxi. 23; xxii. 72; idle, intolerable to a serious soul, xix. 392.
- Fiddlestring, Mr. Hesperus, xix. 85.
- Fienne, Madame de, of Strasburg, xxiv. 72.
- Fiennes, Nathaniel, surrenders Bristol, xiv. 167; in Derby-House Committee, 317; in Council of State, xvii. 8 n.; Keeper of Great Seal, 134; in Committee of Kingship, 297, 304; his speech analysed, xviii. 110.
- Fiesco, Verschönerung des*, Schiller's tragedy of the, v. 36.
- Figaro, Marriage de, ii. 73; iv. 24.
- Fighting, all, an ascertainment who has the right to rule over whom, xiii. 17, 302; murderous Fighting become a 'glorious Chivalry,' 237.
- Filibusters, 'Flibôtiers,' xxiv. 387.
- Finances, bad state of, ii. 57, 80, 111, 134; how to be improved, 101, 111, 121; iii. 13.
- Finch, Colonel, in Gerard's plot, xvii. 17.
- Finch, Minister at Petersburg, xxv. 21.
- Finch, Speaker, his conduct, xiv. 66; dies, 110.
- Fincham, Thomas, Cromwell's letter in behalf of, xviii. 254.
- Finck, General, xxvii. 266; left in charge of Saxony, 314; xxviii. 114, 117; attacking the Austrian Magazines, 153; with Prince Henri at Bautzen, 181; vanguard at Kunersdorf, 207-209, 216, 218, 222; the King hands-over command of the Army to him, 230; resumes it, 235; sent into Saxony, 254; indignation at the loss of Dresden, 276; ordered by the King to plant himself in Maxen, 316; expostulates in vain, 317; sees his enemies gathering round him, 320; such a sphinx-riddle as soldier seldom had, 321; determines to remain, hoping Friedrich may do something, 321; arranges himself with his utmost skill, 322; total defeat, and absolute surrender, 325; tried by court-martial, 328.
- Finckenstein, Minister, Friedrich's Secret Instructions to, xxvii. 124-127; letters from Friedrich to, xxviii. 187, 200, 229; xxix. 268; in the Bavarian business, xxx. 157, 165.
- Finkenstein, Count Fink von, xxi. 453; xxii. 15, 314, 321; his Wife, 460.
- Finckenstein, xxiv. 28, 135, 326.
- Finlater, Countess of, xxx. 213 n.
- Fire, and vital fire, i. 69, 165; miraculous nature of, xii. 21.
- Firebrace, Henry, notice of, xiv. 330.
- Firmian, Count, and the Salzburg Protestants, xxiii. 126.
- Firmian, Archbishop, xxvi. 23.
- Fischer, cited, xxi. 130 n.; xxx. 144 n.
- Fischer, Hussar, at Sangerhausen, xxvii. 358.
- Fischer, J. D., xxv. 99, 103.
- Fischhausen, xxiii. 29.
- Fitz-James, Cardinal Grand Almoner, xxv. 363.
- Five Members, the, xiv. 123.
- Flanders, how Louis XV. conquers, ii. 7.
- Flandre, regiment de, at Versailles, ii. 303, 305, 329.
- Fleet, revolt of, xv. 17.
- Fleetwood, Capt. at Cambridge, xiv. 134; is Lieut.-Col., 189; Lieut.-Gen. at Dunbar, xvi. 50; at Worcester, 174, 177; Deputy in Ireland, 205; Cromwell's letters to, 218, 266; xvii. 14, 143; of Council of State, 8 n; in Cromwell's First Parliament, 23; conduct in Ireland, 141; Major-General, 155 n.; against King, xviii. 79.
- Fleming, Adjutant, notice of, xiv. 262; killed, xv. 3.
- Fleming, Sir Oliver, Master of Ceremonies, xv. 118.
- Flemming, Countess, xxvi. 178.
- Flemming, Fieldmarshal, xxii. 213, 215.
- Flesselles, Paris Provost, ii. 215, 221; shot, 243.
- Fleuriot, Mayor, guillotined, iv. 352.

- Fleury, Joly de, Controller of Finance, ii. 80.
- Fleury, Cardinal, xxii. 121, 123, 197, 250, 260; xxiii. 35, 102, 200, 207, 270; thinks Voltaire might find out Friedrich's secret, xxiv. 152; xxv. 250, sends Maillebois to relief of Prag, 238; letter from Voltaire, 251, 253; obliged to yield to Belleisle's war-schemes, xxvi. 11, 39; bad faith with King Friedrich, 357.
- Flunkies, whom no Hero-King *can* reign over, xiii. 43; flunky, the white, the flower of nomadic servitude, xi. 189. See Valets.
- Fontaine, La, x. 295.
- Fontenai, Mme., iv. 268, 339. See Cabarus.
- Fontenoy, Battle of, xxiv. 341; xxvi. 59, 69.
- Foolish, privilege of the, to be governed by the Wise, xix. 28, 41; foolishness of existing mortals, ix. 7.
- Forbes, General, at Pittsburg, xxviii. 122.
- Forcade, General, at Zorndorf, xxviii. 74; takes the place of Prince Henri in Silesia, xxix. 81.
- Force, La. See Prison.
- Force, universal presence of, i. 68.
- Foreign Office, our, astonishing condition of, xix. 109; reformed, 174.
- Forests, disappearance of, xiii. 122.
- Formey, xxiii. 293, 297; xxiv. 18; xxv. 349; his account of Voltaire, xxvi. 280, 304, 314; of Maupertuis's quarrel with König, 282; his own share in it, 382-386; letter from Voltaire to, xxviii. 368; letters from Lefebvre to, xxx. 5-8; honoured by Queen Ulrique, 77: cited, xxiii. 297 n.; xxvi. 280 n.; xxx. 8 n.
- Formica-leo, natural history of the, ix. 279.
- Forms, necessity for, xii. 244.
- Formula, ii. 264; and Fanaticism destroyed, 278; essential to man, iv. 87; Formulas, the very skin and muscular tissue of Man's Life, xiii. 157, 160.
- Fornham, battle of, xiii. 65.
- Forster and French soldier, iv. 82; account of, 166.
- Forster, John, on Cromwell, xiv. 20.
- Förster, cited, xxi. 27 n.; xxii. 123 n., 134 n.; xxiii. 273 n.; xxiv. 43 n.
- Fortescue, Major-Gen., in Jamaica, xvii. 162; Cromwell's letter to, 168; death of, 171.
- Förtsch, Dr., xxvi. 259.
- Fortuna, vi. 397.
- Fortunatus's wishing-hat, i. 251, 254.
- Fos, Mamsell, of Dessau, xxi. 401.
- Fouché, at Lyons, iv. 270.
- Foulon, bad repute of, ii. 83; nicknamed, 112; advises grass for the people, 138; funeral of, 250; alive, judged, massacred, 254.
- Fouqué, Friedrich de la Motte, parentage, life and writings of, vi. 324-330.
- Fouquet, Intendant, Belleisle's Grandfather, xxiv. 247.
- Fouquet with Friedrich at Cüstrin, xxi. 484; at Reinsberg, xxiii. 330; his march from Fulnek, xxv. 163 n.; at Glatz, xxvi. 105, 135; at Battle of Prag, xxvii. 179; with the Prince of Prussia, 254; Glatz, xxviii. 26; Olmütz, 30; Leutomischl, extremely strict, almost pedantic man, 45; with Margraf Karl, guarding Silesia, 52, 84; Friedrich's kindly thought of him, 136, 299; at Leobschütz, 152, 155; at Landshut, 166, 279; truce with Loudon, 301; fortifies himself firmly about Landshut, 386; with Prince Henri, defends Silesia against the Russians, xxix. 5, 7; out-manœuvred by Loudon; deeply hurt by Friedrich's reproof; speech to his Generals, 8, 9; catastrophe at Landshut, 13-15; his death, xxx. 120.
- Fouquier-Tinville. See Tinville.
- Fournier, and Orléans Prisoners, iv. 58.
- Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, German Literature of the, viii. 215-280.
- 'Four eights,' the reformed workman's, xi. 373, 377.
- Fourth Estate, beginnings of the, ix. 82; its energetic youth, 257; xxiv. 384.
- Fowler, John, Esq., cited, xxviii. 20 n.
- Fox, George, Quaker, vi. 85; xvii. 82; and Cromwell, 156, 157; xviii. 164,

- 165; heavenward aspirations, and earthly independence, i. 202.
- Fox, Right Hon. Henry, xxvi. 248; xxvii. 194, 202.
- Fox, Somerset, his plot, xvii. 17, 20. See Gerard, Vowel.
- Foxes, the, a-pleasant Quaker family, xx. 245, 251, 252, 256, 259; modest *Anti-Hudson* testimonial, 265.
- Foy, Café de, revolutionary, ii. 214, 293, 300.
- France, abject, under Louis XV., ii. 5, 14-17; Kings of, 7; early history of, 8; decay of Kingship in, 12; on accession of Louis XVI. 34; and Philosophy, 35, 37; famine in (1775), 42, 43, 65 (see *Famine*); state of, prior to Revolution, 44; aids America, 54; in 1788, 131; inflammable (July 1789), 218; gibbets, general overturn, 285, how to be regenerated, iii. 21, 22; riotousness of, 149; Mirabeau and, 169; after King's flight, 206; petitions against Royalty, 235; warfare of towns in, 265; Europe leagues against, 284; terror of (in Spring 1792), 292; decree of war, 308; country in danger, 335, 340; general enlisting, 341; rage of (in Autumn 1792), iv. 5, 7; Marat's Circular, September, 57; Sansculottic, 87; declaration of war, 141; Mountain and Girondins divide, 157; communes of, 226; coalition against, 233; levy in mass, 237; prisons, in 1793, 266; one large 'Committee of Mercy' (in 1795), 361; state of, since the Revolution, 399-401; scandalous condition of, xi. 362; Cromwell's letter to King of, xviii. 150; treaty with, xvii. 135, 140, 161; xviii. 88. See French.
- Francia, Dr., xi. 69-136; the notablest of South-American Dictators, 80; parentage and schooling, 92; perhaps the justest Advocate that ever took briefs in that distant country, 97; an unjust judge discomfited, 102; hypochondria, 104; Secretary of a Paraguay National Congress, 107; retires into privacy, 109; his personal appearance, and library, 109; gets himself declared Dictator, 112; a conspiracy detected, and forty persons executed, 114; two harvests in one season, 116, his lease of Paraguay, 119; Funeral Eulogium, 121; his message to the English Nation, 126; his 'Workman's Gallows,' 129; mode of life, 131; treatment of M. Bonpland, 133; rumoured quarrel with his Father, 134; his life of labour ended, 136.
- Francke, Archidiaconus, xxiii. 137.
- François I., xxiv. 347; xxvii. 95.
- Franke, August Hermann, founder of the 'Pietists,' xxii. 210.
- Frankfurt, xxii. 451; Union of, xxv. 343, 391; xxvi. 14, 24; what Friedrich got by it, xxv. 419; xxvi. 5; is seized by the French, xxviii. 144, 145.
- Frankfurt-on-Oder, in possession of the Russians, xxviii. 201-205, 215; the environs, 209-212.
- Franklin, Benjamin, Ambassador to France, ii. 54; his death lamented, iii. 81; bust in Jacobins, 302; brings supplies to Braddock, xxvi. 440; xxx. 128.
- Franquini tries to capture Valori, xxvi. 120, 123.
- Franz, Grand Duke, his prospects of Kaisership, xxiv. 361, 370; a good-tempered, well-conditioned Duke, xxv. 38, 261; Hungarian Diet, 80; joins Neipperg at Frating, 110; marches towards Prag, 114, 117; joins the main Army at Königsaal, xxv. 230; xxvi. 50; with Traun in the Rhine countries, 107; elected Kaiser, 116; opposes the Austrian-French alliance, xxvii. 31; deals largely in stores, 31; forging Reich thunder against Friedrich, 118; a solid pacific gentleman, 137; official violence against Friedrich, 137, 140, 153; advises Prince Karl's dismissal, 405; his sudden death, xxix. 396; mentioned also, xxiv. 138, 140, 249, 335; xxvi. 50.
- Franz Josias of Coburg, genealogical fact concerning, xxii. 415.
- Franz of Brunswick, killed at Hochkirch, xxviii. 105.
- Franz of Dessau, xxvii. 222, 223.

Fraser's Magazine, i. 10, 287.
 Fraternity, doctrine of, iv. 257; and Equality, xix. 29, 68, 96.
 Frederick, Elector, *der Streitbare*, xi. 256.
 Frederick the Pacific, xi. 257; differences with Kunz von Kaufungen, 259; his two children stolen, and recovered, 261.
 Frederick the Wise, who saved Luther from the Diet of Worms, xi. 271.
 Frederick August, the big King of Poland, xi. 281.
 Frederick the Great, symbolic glimpse of, i. 81; at Dresden, vii. 92, 96; his favour for La Motte Fouqué, vi. 324; Voltaire's visit to, vii. 200, his notion of Shakspeare, 228; a Philosopher King, ix. 270.
 Frederick, Prince, of England, xxii. 81, 128; intended visit to Berlin, xxii. 224; arrival in England, 261; letters from, 343; Queen of Prussia's opinion of, xxiii. 23; his three demands, 237; strange treatment of his young Wife, 345; his death, xxvi. 318; his epitaph, 319: mentioned also, xxvii. 201.
 Frederickshall, Charles XII. killed at, xxi. 447.
 Frederika Louisa of Prussia, xxii. 95; demanded in marriage, 262; married to the Margraf of Anspach, 300; visited by her Father and Brother, 420; visits Wilhelmina, xxiii. 165, 166; xxiv. 63.
 Frederika Louisa of Hessen Darmstadt marries Prince of Prussia, xxix. 388.
 Fredersdorf, M., xxiii. 399; xxiv. 61, 135, 305, 331; xxvi. 394; his share in the Voltaire arrest, 403-409.
 Free Corps, Prussian, xxvii. 190.
 Free Men, the Nobles of the World, xix. 49, 301; Press, 267; Trade, in all senses and to all lengths, xi. 340, 373; xxvi. 325; Litany, xxix. 359; World, a, xxv. 249.
 Freedom, meaning of, ii. 227; a higher than freedom from oppression, vii. 342; of the Press, xxiv. 20.
 Freemasonry, xxiii. 362; Cagliostro's, ix. 351.

French, Philosophy, vii. 242, 321; Anglomaniia, ii. 60; character of the, 72; literature in 1784, 69, 73; Parlements, nature of, 77; Mirabeau, type of the, 171; Guards (see Guards); Seigneurs (see Seigneurs); mob, character of, 312; Julius Cæsar on the, iii. 135; Millennium, iv. 150; poetry, vii. 230; Revolution, not yet completed, x. 361; Convention, 372; xix. 278; Priesthood destroyed, x. 375; do-nothing Aristocracy, xiii. 223; the French Revolution a voice of God, though in wrath, 286, 337; Revolution compared to English, xiv. 283; People, the, a kind of Messiah People, very glorious indeed, xix. 7; bitter aggravations, 7; rage against Britain, xx. 283.

French Revolution, xxi. 8; a grand universal Suicide of a despicable Century, 12; what is to follow it, 20; French Protestantism, 273; French Cooks, 427; Fashions, 429; French Protestants of Erlangen, xxiii. 135; War with Karl VI., 206; Camp at Philipsburg, 248; France the top of the Universe, xxiv. 252; urges Sweden to War, 265; xxv. 65; originates the Austrian-Succession War, xxiv. 343; many wars kindled on poor Teutschland, 347; evasion of Pragmatic Sanction, 349; ushering in a French Revolution, 350; French Ambition *versus* the stingy Fact, 366; xxv. 11, 66, 105, 259; ruin of German Enterprise, 299; Army in the Netherlands, 331; xxvi. 198; at Stockstadt, xxv. 384; imminent peril of, 389; Friedrich decides to intervene, 390; little grateful for their deliverance, 415; magnanimous promises ending in nothing, 429; xxvi. 12-16, 22; not even money-payment, 109; pique against him, 158; invade Holland, 216; First Nation of the Universe, 230; an Army of extreme dissoluteness and levity, 233, 234; of two Frenchmen in a Foreign Court, one must die, 331; French claims to North America, 430-436-442; French-English War, xxvii. 36; France joins Austria and the Reich,

- 119; France intrigues with Sweden against Friedrich, 131; share of the expected plunder, 133; the first in the field, 134; "L'Armée de la Dauphine," 248, 277; intent to deliver Saxony, 277, 279; at Gotha, 292; ventures forward on hearing of the Haddick Invasion, 323; retreats at sound of Friedrich, 326; puffed up with vanity, 327; Rossbach, 331; exultant spirits, 337; never was army better beaten, 341, 345; rapacity and profligate insubordination, 354-362; France will not have peace, xxviii. 6; incredible pains with the Swedes, 11; financial difficulties, 125; getting weary of the war, 131; joy over the battle of Bergen, 151; invasion of England, 179; flat-bottomed fleet destroyed at Havre, 180; Toulon fleet chased and ruined, 255, 256; Conflans's fleet and the grand Invasion-scheme entirely wrecked, 341-345; temporary bankruptcy, and melting of the national spoons, 346, 347; French exactions on Germany, xxix. 170, 171; preparation for the General Overturn, 174; anxious for peace, 239, 334, 336; results of the war, 342; the French Revolution, Part Third of World-History, 347, 348; Kaiser Joseph's visit, and opinion of French society, xxx. 132, 133. *French Revolution*, Carlyle's, published, xx. 176.
- Fréron, notice of, iii. 35; renegade, iv. 361; Gilt Youth of, 366; poor joke of Voltaire's on, xxiii. 316; xxvi. 312, 315.
- Fréteau, at Royal Session, ii. 114; arrested, 115, liberated, 119.
- Freyberg, Battle of, xxix. 323.
- Freyburg, Siege of, xxv. 415; xxvi. 13.
- Freys, the Jew brokers, iii. 27, imprisoned, iv. 289.
- Freytag, Baron, and his Austrian Swindling, xxi. 373.
- Freytag, arrest of Voltaire, xxvi. 403-413.
- Freytag's, Dr., account of West Prussia, xxx. 55.
- Friedel, Kammergericht Rath, xxx. 190, 191.
- Friedland, Friedrich at, xxiv. 302.
- Friedrich August of Saxony, left under the guardianship of his Mother, xxix. 405; lived to see strange things in the world, 406.
- Friedrich Christian, Kurprinz of Saxony, in Dresden, during siege of, xxviii. 259; negotiates peace, xxix. 336; King Friedrich dines with him at Moritzburg, 343; death, 395, 405; Elector little more than two months, 406.
- Friedrich Eugen of Wurtemberg, xxv. 143, 147; xxvi. 238. See Duchess of Wurtemberg.
- Friedrich IV. of Denmark, xxi. 436.
- Friedrich IV., Duke of Holstein-Gottorp and Schleswig, xxix. 260.
- Friedrich, King of Bohemia, Winter-König, xxi. 189, 329, 331, 333; ex-King, 334, 336.
- Friedrich, Landgraf of Hessen, xxv. 138.
- Friedrich, Madam, lately Garden-maid at Seidlitz, xxix. 337.
- Friedrich, Margraf of Schwedt, xxiv. 320.
- Friedrich of Baireuth, xxii. 324, 417; xxiii. 16; arrives at Berlin, 21, introduced to Wilhelmina, 22, an honourable and eligible young Prince, 23; betrothal, 23; a narrow escape, 66; marries Wilhelmina, 71; full of honest sunshine towards her, 183, 229, at the Rhine Campaign, 246.
- Friedrich of Meissen, Hochmeister, xxi. 252, 253.
- Friedrich, Prince, and his Hessians, xxv. 419; at Vilshofen, xxvi. 40; Edinburgh, 40.
- Friedrich the Fair, Duke of Austria, xxi. 155.
- Friedrich II., Kaiser, xxi. 115, 116.
- Friedrich III., Kaiser, xxi. 315.
- Friedrich II., Kurfurst of Brandenburg, recovers Neumark from the Teutsch Ratters, xxi. 214, 218; his Pomeranian War, 214, 219.
- Friedrich III. Burggraf of Nurnberg, xxi. 129; troubles with the Nurnbergers, 130; Burggraviate made hereditary, 131; Kaiser Rudolf's friend and helper, 134, 137.

Friedrich IV., xxi. 151, 160; aids Kaiser Ludwig, 154.

Friedrich V., xxi. 179; his Daughter, 183.

Friedrich VI., xxi. 160, 181, 184; helps Sigismund, 191; buys Brandenburg, 193; Noble Robber-lords brought to reason, 201; Heavy Peg, 203; tap-root of the Prussian Nation, 206.

Friedrich I., King, and his Grandchildren, xxi. 27; rather 'an expensive Herr,' 52; the first King of Prussia, 55; his back injured in infancy, 56, 378; quarrels with his Stepmother, 57; how he came by his 'Kingship,' 60; his sublime Coronation, 64; his Father's Death, 370; how Austria swindled him out of Schwiebus, 373; his true Hohenzollern character, 378; closing days, 380; his third marriage, 383; death, 385, 409.

Friedrich II., sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, xxi. 3; physiognomic traits, 4, human interest in what he did, 5; the Last of the Kings, 8, 21; English prepossessions about him, 15; by no means a perfect demigod, yet a true man and King, 18, 28. Joy at his birth, 26; his christening, 29; his ancestors, 206, 343, 370. Not a skilful gambler and worshipper of Beelzebub, 209; recovery of Jägerndorf, 349; interest in Jülich, 356; opening the Great Kurfürst's coffin, 370. Infancy, 382, 393; French educational element, 393; xxii. 199; one of the prettiest vividest little boys, xxi. 393; his affectionate disposition, 396; xxii. 16, 37, 56; bad spelling, xxi. 398; xxii. 57, 73; German element, xxi. 398, 399; his Father's Spartan discipline, 408; xxii. 74, 181, 198; one of his first impressions of war, xxi. 435; his Tutors, 453; xxii. 15, 56; Portraits of him, xxi. 454; the commonly-received Portrait, 457.

Friedrich II., vol. xxii., his education, 17, 56, 71, 198; his Father's notions about it, 19; miniature Soldiering, 21; his Cousins, 35; love for his Sister Wilhelmina, 37; at the Roucoules Soiree, 37; troubles preparing from afar, 55, 130; his contra-

band Latin lessons, 58; French fashions; his bright locks to be ruthlessly shorn away, 60; his Theological drill-sergeants, 61; divulsion fearfully widening between Father and Son, 67, 239; George I. pleased with him, 90; goes into the Potsdam Guards, 131; surrounded by intrigues and treachery, 145; unwillingly at the Tobacco-Parliament, 171, 198; his life heavy at Potsdam, 198; his Books, 199; visit to King August at Dresden, 215; dissolute seductions, 217, 226; poor Fritz fallen into the wake of Beelzebub, 220; xxiii. 55; miserable health, xxii. 222, 227; his soul tragically dimmed for the remainder of life, 223; pleased with Maréchal de Saxe, 231; writes to Queen Caroline, unknown to his Father, 237, 317; letter to his Father, and angry reply, 239; his Father's ill-treatment, 244, 254, 265, 281; thoughts of flight, 285, 309, 328, 334; his regiment on the march, 291; his Father surprises him at unlawful amusements, 305; publicly beaten by his Father, 308, 385, 405, makes a companion of Katte, 310, 404; his debts, 328; xxiii. 191; off to Dresden, xxii. 334; Father will not agree to his marriage, 344; Hotham's testimony of him, 359; letter to Hotham, 370; at King August's Camp of Radewitz, 376, 381, 384, 390; attempted flight, 385; rumour of marriage with Maria Theresa, 387; England will not sanction flight, 395; letter to Hotham, 402; will fly, in spite of all, 403, 406, 421; Journey to the Reich, 408; arrangements for flight, 423, 435, 442; more ill-usage, 424; flight prevented, 444; paternal taunts, 450; a detective prisoner, 451, 453; chastised like a dog, 452; confesses nothing, and narrowly escapes his Father's sword, 462; an arrested Deserter, 463, 466; a prisoner at Mittenwalde; interrogated and threatened by Grumkow, 471; rigorous confinement at Cüstrin, 472, 481; his notion of Predestination, 477;

- xxiii. 45; to be tried by Court-Martial, xxii. 481; a lucid human judgment in him, 482; sees poor Katte led to execution, 489.
- Friedrich II.**, vol. xxiii., crushed down by sorrow and despair, 3; Chaplain Müller's favourable testimony, 5, 10; condemned to death, 8; to repent, and not perish, 9; takes an Oath of repentance and prostrate submission, 10, 11; letter to his Father; begins gradually a new career, 12; corresponds with Grumkow, 14, 95, 103, 104, 107, 145; among the Domain Sciences at Cüstrin, 37, 39; efforts to regain favour, 41; polite cloak-of-darkness, 41; visited by his Father, 42; loyalty to fact, 46; his life at Cüstrin, as reported by Schulenburg, 51; the beautiful Madame de Wreech, 53, 57; glimpses of Friedrich's habits, 60, 65; returns to Berlin at his Sister's Wedding, 76, a much-changed Crown-Prince, 77; solitude of soul, 78; Colonel of the Goltz Regiment, 80, 114; whom shall he marry? 85; all romance too sorrowfully swept out of him, 86; what he thought of his destined Wife, 95, 103, 105, 110, 112, 164, 183; continued love for Wilhelmina, 102, 111, 112, 187, 227; his Betrothal, 111; Life at Ruppín, 114; anxiety to learn what seemed worth learning; military studies, 116; love for his rugged Father, 117, 385, 423; spirit of frolic, 118, 246; letter to Captain Hacke, 147; to Seckendorf, 149; what he thought of the Kaiser, 163; his Marriage, 182; back to Ruppín, 190; at Philipsburg; his first experience of arms, 213, 233; his interest in the war, 219, 225; a difficult meeting with Wilhelmina, 227; what he thought of the Rhine Campaign, 242; news of his Father's illness, 247, 252; visits the French Camp, 248; visits Wilhelmina at Baireuth, and talks of his future plans, 252; in his Father's sick-room, 257; sent to Prussia, 265, 266; his Father's growing satisfaction with him, 267, 359; his Apprenticeship completed, 277; life at Reinsberg, an actual snatch of something like the Idyllic, 282, 330, 376, 392, 398; love of Music, 289; choice of associates, 295; religious doubts, 298; literary correspondence, 300; writes to Voltaire, 302; ardent admiration, 321, 322, 379; their correspondence, 321, 360; correspondence with Suhm, 332; with Manteufel, 333; Dr. Zimmermann's puddle of calumnies, 334; a visit to the Prince of Mirow, 335; return visits, 339; quality of his Letters to his Father, 343; visits Loo with his Father, 358; his *Anti-Macchiavel*, 360, 379; becomes a Freemason, 362, 365; his literary achievements, 376; journey to Prussia with his Father, 385; visit of Lord Baltimore and others, 394; his poor Father's last illness, 409, 414; long private dialogues with him, 416; his Father's death, 420, 422; Friedrich is King, 423.
- Friedrich II.**, vol. xxiv., his Accession, 3; editorial prophecies about, 4; old veracity shining through the giddy new element, 5; wishes to keep well with France and Hanover; a cask of wine to Voltaire, 7; surrounded by adventurers; a new knighthood; fine free expressive face, 8; would make men happy, 9; opens the public granaries, 11; finds employment for a thousand poor old women, 11; abolishes the use of torture, 12; will build up the Academy of Sciences, 14; invites Wolf, 14; and Maupertuis, 15; enjoins toleration for all Religions, 17; tries Free Press, 18; his activity wonderful, 21; writes many letters, 21; increases his Army, 22; conduct to old companions; every inch a King, 23; loves men of merit, 28; affection for his Mother, 29; filial piety; lessening intimacy with his own Queen, 32; minimum of change in his Father's methods or men, 33; what he will grow to, 36; his Biographers, 38; he considers it unnecessary to be crowned, 41; accepts Homages, personally, in

three places, 45; interview with Dickens, 51; best to be frank with him, 52; difficult for a Diplomatist to deal with, 55; invitations to Voltaire, 57; visits Wilhelmina at Baireuth, 60; two days incognito at Strasburg, 65; arrives at Wesel, 78; ague, 84, 129, 135, light contempt for Cleve Monks and their Masses, 85; Berg-Julich preparations, 87, 127; first meeting with Voltaire, 87; takes Herstal in hand, 108; a long account to settle with Karl VI., 116; returns home without seeing George II., 119; means to do his work like a King, 129; Wilhelmina's account of him, 131; not amiable to everybody, 132; news of the Kaiser's death, 135; momentous resolution formed in consequence, 145, to seize Silesia, 147; mysterious preparations, 149; Voltaire tries to discover his secret, 152; he knows his own mind clearly, 155; candour of confession, 158; piqued with the Old Dessauer, 158; audiences at Berlin, the secret out, 160; Address to his Generals, 164; away, Frankfurtward, 166, 177; crossing the Rubicon, 179; at Crossen, 179, steps into Silesia, 180; Grünberg, 182; Glogau Church, 187; Schloss of Weichau, 190; industriously conciliatory, 191; Milkau; two Messengers from Breslau; a wet march, 196; Herrendorf, 199; before Glogau, 199; Proposals at Vienna, 201; refusal with mockery, 203; "*la Gloire*," 207, 209, 268; xxv. 50, 205; to Breslau, xxiv. 212; gains possession, 214; festivities, 218; at Ottmachau, 226; high moods, 229; bombardment of Neisse, 234; home to Berlin; a life of labour cut out for himself, 240; quizzing the Czarina, 260; returns to Silesia, 268; tries to make terms with Austria, 269; at Schweidnitz, 271; narrow escape at Baumgarten, 273; hears of project for partitioning Prussia, 283; his Life-element, 286; insists that Glogau be taken, 288; his high satisfaction, 292; takes the Field in Jagerndorf country, 295,

305; Battle of Mollwitz, 307; slow exactitude, 314, 328; seeming ruin, and flight to Oppeln, 321, 330; back to Mollwitz, 332; Austrians totally beaten, 335; takes Brieg, 337; Excellencies from the four winds take wing towards Friedrich, 340; his business in the Austrian-Succession War, 343; his account with Pragmatic Sanction, 355; visited by Belleisle, 369; seizes Brieg, 370; rests on his oars, 404; recognises Zieten's worth, 406; improves his Cavalry, 407.

Friedrich II., vol. xxv., Camp of Strehlen, 14; diplomatic veracity and skill, 18; audience with Hyndford, 20; "mendacity," 23; Treaty with France, 25; Valori's diplomatic note, 28; will renounce the Berg-Julich Controversy, 28; misunderstands the English, 33; vividly characteristic interview with Robinson and Hyndford, 42; practical insight and singular human faculty, 51, 84; cavalry review at Strehlen, 55; takes the field again, 59; encamps at Gross Neundorf, 60; refuses to treat with Austria, 69; secret negotiations, 73, urges Karl Albert, 76; questionable diplomacies, 83, 90; meeting at Klein-Schnellendorf, 87; secret treaty with Austria, 88; sham-siege at Neisse, 91; homage at Breslau, 94; home to Berlin, 96; secret treaty divulged, 97, 114, prompt action thereupon, 121, 123; boundary stones of Silesia, 122; visits Dresden; urges attack on Vienna, 124; off for Prag, 125; determined to have Glatz, 127; gives a new Dress to the Virgin, 127; at Olmutz, 129; disappointed with his Moravian Expedition, 148; urges the taking of Iglau, 151; cannot get Brünn, 154; gossipy Letters, 156; trouble with the Saxons, 157; their partnership ended, 158; resentment, 159; getting instructed by the stripes of experience, 159; in full march out of Moravia, 160; at Chrudim, 160; Schwerin piqued at preference shown to the Old Dessauer, 163; Synopsis

of the Moravian Failure, 163, 164; Winter Campaigns, 164; reins-up the Old Dessauer, 166; humours Walrave, 170, preparations for meeting Prince Karl, 171; on march from Chrudim, 173; takes a baking of bread from the Austrians, 175; Battle of Chotusitz, 178, 184; sympathy for General Pallandt, 192; interview with Belleisle, 195; Treaty of peace with Austria, 197; triumphant return homewards, 199; hopes for a general peace, 203; veracity of intellect, 206; life at Reinsberg, 206; begins writing his Memoirs, 207; could recognise the uses of religion, 210; opens his Opera, 212, 261, 335, takes the waters at Aachen, 213; a king thoroughly practical, 214; assurances of friendship to the new Kaiser, 216; watching the omens, 218, 308; receives Voltaire at Aachen, 250, 253; exertions to bring about peace, 279, 283; his patience exhausted, 311, 313; Austria to take back Silesia, 317; receives Voltaire's fourth visit, 318; sees what he has come about, 322; his characteristic 'Marginalia,' 323-326; visits Baireuth, 327; gets notice of Treaty of Worms, 339; preparations for War, 341, 346; skilful diplomacies, 342, Union of Frankfurt, 343; French Treaty, 345; arts and business of Peace, 348; grants right of appeal to himself in person, 349; suggests a Wife for the Heir of Russia, 352; on good terms with the Czarina, 352, 357; his Sister's marriage, 353; preparations for a Campaign, 358, Parting Letter to the Duke of Württemberg, 365; writes a quizzing Testimonial to Pollnitz, 366; engages the Barbarina for his Opera, 368; takes possession of Ost-Friesland, 373; how forsaken by the French, 381; his praise of Prince Karl's Rhine campaign, 388; decides to invade Bohemia, 390; marches upon Prag, 394, 401; his Manifesto, 395; English theory of him, 396; secret article of treaty with the French, 396; anxious to

keep well with Saxony, 398; interview with the Duke of Weissenfels; puts military problems to himself in all manner of scenery, 401; in haste to get hold of Prag, 403; indifference to personal danger, 405; captures Prag, 406; admits he did not understand War at this period, 407; dreads public opinion in France too much, 408; marches, amid difficulties, towards Austria, 410; shut out from all news by Pandour swarms, 413; hears that the French have left him to his fate, and that Prince Karl is close upon him, 422; tries to have battle with Prince Karl, 422; is out-manceuvred by Traun, who schools him in the art of War, 426, 428, 441; loses three garrisons; encamped at Konopischt, 427; has to retire northward, 428; a heavy-laden sorely-exasperated man, 429; gathers himself at Kolin, 430; posts himself on the north shore of the Elbe, 432; retreats to Silesia, 435; foiled on every point; his veracity of mind, 440.

Friedrich II., vol xxvi., general impression that he had ruined himself, 5; private inexpugnability of mind; delivers Silesian Army to Old Dessauer, and hastens to Berlin, 6; spurt of impatience, 7; his feelings towards the French, 13-16; informed of Belleisle's capture, 20; proposes Peace, 25; thinks to make friends with Saxony, 26; financial difficulties, and dexterity of management, 27; changed for the better by his reverses, 28; King of Poland for Kaiser, 30; Saxon antipathies, 31, 37, 88, 103; anger at Seckendorf, 42; army preparations in Silesia, 43; letters unusually frank, 43, 52; Austrian invasion to recover Silesia, 46; studies to be ready for Prince Karl, 48, 50; indignation against Saxony; establishes Camp of Observation, 51; will play his part among the crowned heads of Europe, 53; Headquarter at Camenz, 54; surprises Valori, in not defending his mountain passes, 72; full of silent finesse; very dan-

gerous to play with at games of skill, 73; much satisfied with his Cousin Margraf Karl, 75, decoys Prince Karl on, 76; the big moment approaching, 79-81; Hohenfriedberg, 89-95; God has helped me very wonderfully this day, 98; receives Protestant deputation at Landshut, 100; Camp of Chlum, 102, hopes for peace; Convention of Hanover, 103, 136; snubbed by Bruhl, 108; writes to France for help in money, but to no purpose, 109; voluntary subsidy from Brandenburg, 110; indignant Manifesto against Saxony, 111; does not yet strike, 111; no peace with Austria and Saxony, 112; no braver little figure on the earth at that epoch, 116; admires Maria Theresa after a sort, 117; still in Bohemia, watching Prince Karl's movements, 118; at Jaromirz, 123, moves northward, 124; at Staudentz, hears of Prince Karl's advance, 127; rapidly forms his plans, 128, 129, battle of Sohr, 130-134; returns to Berlin, 136; new hope of peace, 140; combined Austrian-Saxon scheme of attack on Brandenburg, 140-144; instant preparations to meet it, 144, hard words to the Old Dessauer, 145; takes command of Silesian Army, 145, 146; hoodwinks Prince Karl, 148, 149; crosses the Queiss at Naumburg, 150, 151; beats the Saxons at Hennersdorf, 151, 152, cannot catch Prince Karl, who tumbles home double-quick, 153, 154; renews proposals for peace, 156; finds Brühl's rage yellower than ever, 157; runs his risks with the Czarina, 157; again snubbed by France, 158; Old Dessauer conducts him over the field of Kesselsdorf, 168; lodges in Dresden, 169; his enemies compelled at last to come to terms, 170; interview with D'Arget; 'would not henceforth attack a cat, except to defend myself,' 172, 175; Treaty of Dresden, 176-180; sees strange changes since his first visit to Dresden, 178; welcome in Berlin; 'long live Friedrich the Great,' 179; has climbed the heights,

183; hopes for Peace to the end of his life, 184; the chief memory of him, that of a King and man who fought consummately well, 185; difficulty of narrating his peaceful conquests, 187; he takes the waters at Pyrmont, 189; pays with exactness all losses incurred during the war, 189; goes into Law-Reform, 190, 191, 222, 239, 240, 324; temptations from England to play Conquering Hero; Stadtholder of Holland, 192, 193; Sans-Souci, 193, 194; renewal of the Reinsberg Program, 196, 324, 328; attaches the two Keiths to his service, 221, 222, something like a stroke of apoplexy, 223; Silesia guaranteed by all the Powers, 227; getting decidedly deep into snuff, 228; visited by Maréchal de Saxe, 231, 233; strikes a medal to celebrate his Law-Reforms, 240; literary works; wishes Voltaire were with him, 242, 273; a Land's-Husband, not inferior to his Father, 243, 324-328; Army-Reviews, 244; audience with Sir Hanbury Williams, 245; pays back an Austrian-Review affront, 250, 251; rights Candidatus Lunsenbarth's wrongs, 251-262; interview in the garden, 257, 260; Wilhelmina at Berlin; reception of Voltaire, 264; refuses to know the Pompadour, 264; a present to his old friend Keith, 266; Berlin Carrousel, 269-273, experiences of Voltaire which he does not like, 274; Voltaire's visit much misunderstood to this day, 276; Friedrich's royal provision for him, 277; recognises his Pope, 279, 281, 282; painfully sensible what a skinless explosive Trismegistus he has got, 289, 330; hears of Voltaire's Steuer-Scheine proceedings, 297; takes the matter silently, but with boundless contempt, 310; two letters to Voltaire; rough common-sense of a German, who speaks what he thinks, 312, 314; anxiety for Wilhelmina's health, 318; visits Ost-Friesland, 319; Shipping companies and Sea-Enterprises, 322, 324; English Privateer controversy, 323, 423-428; no

faith in Free-Trade, 325; grateful for Voltaire's honest literary help, 336, 338; how he regards Maupertuis, D'Argens, Algarotti, 338-340, a great appetite for conversation and turn for bantering, 340; La Mettrie, 341-343, 355, esteem for Rothenburg, 344; for Marshal Keith, 345; quits Rothenburg's death-bed in tears, 351; writes to Wilhelmina, 354, 355; his French Colony of Wits a sorry set, 362; 'Ach, mein lieber Sulzer,' 363; domestic details from Preuss and Demon Newswriter, 366, 370, 373, 376; fantasizing on his flute, 368; diabolic rumours about his private life, 371-373; defends Maupertuis against Voltaire, 389; peals of laughter at reading Akakia, 390; in a towering passion with Voltaire, 392, 393; outward reconciliation, 395; last interview, 398; determines to have his Book of Poesies back from Voltaire at Frankfurt, 402, 403; no farther correspondence with him, 416; no Muses'-Heaven on Telluric terms, 417; sees indications of approaching War, 417, 443, 448; indifferent to the King of the Romans Question, 419, 420, anxious to establish a Foreign Trade, 423; minds his own affairs, 428; his Thud Silesian War, 448; visits Holland; interview with De Catt, 448-452.

Friedrich II., vol. xxvii., the Menzel Documents, 6, 10, 12, 16; irritated with the Czarina, 15; a very stormy and dubious future, 19, 24, 25; Neutrality Convention with England, 26; no intention to be Adjunct and Satellite of France, 32, 34; perplexity of his situation, 41, 44; army in the perfection of order, 44; puts a question at Vienna, 48, 51; consults with his principal Generals, 48, 49; marches towards Saxony, 52, 57; letters to Duke Ferdinand; army arrangements, 54, 55; to his Brother and Sister; war inevitable, 55; consultations with Mitchell, 57, 58; enters Saxony, 59; cannot make terms with Polish Majesty, 60, 61, 77; secures the originals of the Menzel Docu-

ments, 62-64; blockades the Saxons in Pirna country, 66, 71, 75; joins Keith in Bohemia, 81, 82; battle of Lobositz, 84-96; writes to Wilhelmina, 94; compels his Saxon prisoners to enter his army, 109-112; prepares to winter in Dresden, 115; all Europe against him, 118, 119; no King living has better servants, 120; begins his Prussian Free Corps, 122; his life in Dresden, 120, 122, 123; visit to his Mother, 123; Secret Letter of Instructions to Finckenstein, 125, 126; provides himself with poison, in case of the worst; last adieu to his Mother, 127; anger of the Great Powers against him, 132; withdraws the Wesel - Cleve garrisons, 135; gets little immediate help from England, 136; remonstrates against Austria's unseemly language, 138; for what small sums he got his work well done, 140; his Instructions to Count Finck, 141; four Invasions advancing on him, 142; suddenly marches on Prag, 142, 145; before the city, 152; junction with Schwerin, 154, 156; got to know his man, after fighting him a month or two, 156; battle of Prag, and defeat of the Austrians, 163-177; over-haste, dispute with Schwerin, 163, 175; exultation and congratulations, 184; Prag not captured, 185, 187; general discouragement of his enemies, 185; Friedrich and Chat-ham, 199; Ban of the Reich, 205, 321; finds siege of Prag unexpectedly tedious, 205-210; rumours of Daun's approach, 211; sets forth to meet him, 212; battle of Kolin, 211-230; hasty orders to Moritz of Dessau, 223, 224; retreat to Nimburg, 228; tears for his lost soldiers, 234; at Leitmeritz, 237; grief at hearing of his mother's death, 240-243; predestination, 249; would bribe the Pompadour to obtain peace, 250; his own view of his troubles, 251; indignation at the Prince of Prussia's disastrous folly, 260; meeting of the Brothers; stern condemnation, 263-266; well-nigh desperate, 267; vain

efforts to get battle with the Austrians, 267, 268; marches to Dresden to look into the French movements, 269, 277; hears of Winterfeld's death, 275; near Erfurt; on march for Berlin, against Haddick, 278, 314; back towards Erfurt; writes to Richelieu, urging peace, 280; sees hope of help from England and Pitt, 286; enters Erfurt, 286; visits the Duke and Duchess of Sachsen-Gotha, 288, 289; writes to the Duchess; to Wilhelmina, 290; high opinion of Prince Henri, 291; xxviii. 286; writes to Duchess, xxvii. 294; hears bad news from Prussen, 295; a bright-glancing articulate man, not to be struck dumb by the face of Death itself, 296, fighting for existence, and yet going into verse in addition, 297; Lamentation Psalms, on strange conditions, 298, 301, 311; again brought into correspondence with Voltaire, 300, 305; letter to Wilhelmina: utterly resolved not to survive defeat, 307-310; will die, if he needs must, in utmost spasm of battle to the last, 313; interviews with Gottsched at Leipzig, 315, 316; a word of encouragement to Wilhelmina, 318; cheering prospect of work now ahead; Ferdinand of Brunswick to be General of Britannic Army, 324; Pitt again in power, 325; Friedrich marches after Combined Army, 326; at Weissenfels, 328; Rossbach, 331; watching the enemy, 336; a wager of life, with glorious possibilities, 339; has got the flank of Dauphiness, and means to keep it, 343; never was Army better beaten, 345; his famed *Congé de l'Armée*, 347; marches for Silesia, the news ominously doubtful, 364, 366; Schweidnitz and Breslau lost, 367, 370; rigorous indignant messages, 371; addresses his Generals at Parchwitz: "We must beat the enemy, or perish all," 372-375; snatches of Camp Dialogue, 375, 376; hears with joy that the Austrians are advancing on him, 379; captures their bakery, 379; full view of the

Austrian Army; his plan of battle soon clear to him, 383; the 'Oblique Order,' 383, 389; hears, amid his field-music, the sound of Psalms, 385; battle of Lenthén; no finer bit of work for hundreds of years, 386-397, 406; talks with a landlord at Saara, 398; at Lissa comes unexpectedly on a party of Austrian Officers, 400; a homely *Te-Deum* from his soldiers, 401; a pious people of right Teutsch stuff, 401; recovers Breslau, 403; popular astonishment and enthusiasm, 406; an English Pottery-Apotheosis, 407.

Friedrich II., vol. xxviii., winter in Breslau, 3-5; writes pacifically to Maria Theresa, 6; hears with disgust that East-Prussen has become Russian, 8; raises no new taxes, 13; English subsidies, 14-17; present from Miss Wyndham, 17-21; letter to an English lady, 19; good news of Ferdinand's Rhine Campaign, 23; recaptures Schweidnitz, 24, 25; marches for Olmutz, 26; lays siege, 30; not thought to shine in the sieging line, 31; Daun feels his procedures to be altogether feline, 32; impatient of his slow siege, 34; hears of August Wilhelm's death, 34; mistakes Daun's movements for an intention to give him battle, 36; one more convoy indispensable, 36; convoy lost; and Olmutz siege over, 42, 43; masterly retreat to Leutomischl, 44; near Königsgratz, planted impregnable inside the Daun redoubts, 46; marches against Fermor, 51; extremity of grief on account of Wilhelmina, 50, 135; Paper of Directions for Prince Henri, in case of death, 51; straight for Frankfurt, 52; unduly despises Russian soldiery, 60, 79; inspects Dohna's camp at Gorgast, 60; joy of the country people on his appearance among them, 60; hastens to attack the Russian Army, 63; neglects to abolish the Russian Baggage, 66, 77; battle of Zorndorf, 65-78; praises Seidlitz, 76; marches for Saxony, 80; replies to Daun's cautionary note to Fermor, 87; with

Prince Henri in Dresden, 88; cannot draw Daun from his entrenchments, 88; suddenly takes the road for Neisse, 89; piqued at seeing Daun ahead of him, and encamps directly in front of him, 91; obstinate rashness, and contempt for Daun, 91; anxious to get out of his bad post, 96; battle of Hochkirch, 96-107; orders retreat, 108; takes his punishment with wonderful cheerfulness, 109; hears of Wilhelmina's death, 110; fixed intention to march to Neisse, 114; sends his wounded to Hoyerswerda, 115; sweeps past Daun, and arrives at Görlitz, 116; Silesia brushed clear; back to Dresden, 120; his marches wonderful this year, 121; a sad and silent winter for him, 126, 134; the campaign over, and nothing come of it, on either side, but frightful loss, 126; mutually vigilant Winter-quarters, 129, 130; vain hopes of peace, 131; must stand on the defensive henceforth, 133, 134, 157; writes considerably in the intervals of business, 135; affectionate consideration for Fouquet, 136; his heavy Finance problem, 137, 138, miraculously meagre War-Budget, and methods of gathering it, 138-142; issue of base money, 140; opening of spring campaign, 143; drives Deville from Leobschütz, 155; at Reich-Hennersdorf, 159; introduces Horse-Artillery, 160; changes Guichard into Quintus Icilus, 161; encamped at Schmöttseifen, 164, 165; watching Daun, 169; sends Wedell against Soltikof, 171, 174, 177; must look to the Russian problem himself, 178; rendezvous at Sagan, 184; tries to intercept Loudon and Haddick, 184; attacks Haddick, 186; marches towards Frankfurt, 187; at Lebus, 200; out reconnoitering, 206, battle of Kunersdorf, 207-234; a peasant brings a draught of water, 209-213; not so dependent as might be imagined, 214; reckons that the victory is his, 221; three horses shot under him: "I, like the rest, must stand to my

duty here!" 225; passionately struggles, commands, entreats, 226; the Prussian Army all in flight; Friedrich among the last to quit the ground, 227; looks after two wounded Lieutenants, 228; taking leave both of Kingship and of life, hands over the Army to Finck's charge, 229; writes to Schmettan in Dresden, authorising capitulation, 231; despair did not last quite four days, 235; a most lone soul of a man, but continually toiling forward, 236; might have been ruined now, had his enemies been diligent about it, 237; utterances to D'Argens, heavy-laden, nearly desperate, 242, 243; second letter to Schmettan, must defend Dresden to the utmost, 244; thanks Wolfersdorf for his defence of Torgau, 254; grief and indignation at loss of Dresden, 265, 273; lays hold of Sagan, and establishes communication with Prince Henri, 286; Voltaire peace-expectations; anxieties, private and public, 287, 289; manœuvring against Soltikof, 291, 297; on the Heights of Zobelwitz; getting tragically scarce of persons to consult, 298; much risen in hope, 299; ill of gout, for three weeks cannot stir from his room, 300; takes to writing about Charles XII., 300; carried on a litter to Glogau, 301; arrives in Prince Henri's Camp; free of his gout, in joyful spirits and high humour, 314; procedures against Daun too rapid and rash, 315; a proud Friedrich, got on his feet again, 316; orders Finck to plant himself in Maxen, 317; will not be dissuaded, 317; himself follows; at Wilsdruf, 319; messages to Finck, 319, 320; whirlwind of grief and indignation at the catastrophe of Maxen, 326; no ray of pity visible for poor Finck then or afterwards, 328; sets Daun at utter defiance, 329; mutually hostile Winter-quarters, 332; 'Protestant Hero,' 337; amused at the French resource of borrowing Plate for coining, 346; publishes an expurgated edition of

his Poems, 348; Voltaire Peace-negotiations, 355; their characteristic correspondence, 359-375; rebukes his persevering ridicule of Maupertuis, 'trouble not the ashes of the dead,' 373-5; sends Lord Marischal to Spain on a diplomatic mission, 375; many fallacies of hope, almost pathetic to think of, 378, one hope that did not deceive him, hope in his own best exertion to the very death, 379; his enemies more confident than ever, refuse to exchange prisoners, 380; wholesale recruiting or crimping, 381; is considered to be ruined, 390; gloom or censure among his own people, 390; incredible diligence and persistence, 390; a man drenched in misery, but doing his very utmost in it, with or without success, 392.

Friedrich II., vol. xxix., his ill-luck does not yet cease its sad company, 3; his marches exceed all calculation and example, 4; encamped near Meissen, 4; clings to the hope of peace, and of extraneous help, 6; finds the Russian movements full of enigma, 7; reproaches Fouquet for losing Landshut, 8; tries to get a stroke on Lacy, and to get well into Silesia, 9, 10; without success, 12; visible ill-humour, 13; hears of Fouquet's catastrophe, 13; prepares for siege of Dresden, 16, 17; tries to decoy Daun from his entrenchments; marches for Silesia, 17; is himself decoyed by Lacy, 19, 20; hears that Daun is at Bautzen before him, and hastens onward; such a march for heat and difficulty as he never had before, 20; hears that Daun has reached Gorlitz, and determines again to turn on Lacy, 21, 22; skirmish of horse, and personal jeopardy, 22; besieges Dresden; one of the rapidest and most furious sieges on record, 27; expects to be master of the town in a few days, 29; hears of Daun's arrival, 30; his soul black and wrathful, worn almost desperate, 31; deals hard measure on Regiment Bernburg, 32; retires from Dresden; hears of the loss of Glatz,

34; beaten on every hand, 37; will make for Silesia without loss of an hour, 38; dissatisfied with Prince Henri's cautious proceedings, 39-41; more Alcides-like than ever, 47, arranges his march beforehand to the last item, 53, 54; on to Liegnitz, attended all the way by Daun and Lacy, 55-60; Daun, Lacy and Loudon all agape for him, in scientific postures, 61; provisions all but run out, 62; marches, during night, unobserved through Liegnitz, 63; Austrian-Irish deserter, 64; leaves his camp-fires all carefully burning, 64; arranges himself in order of battle, and tries for a snatch of sleep, 66; suddenly attacked by Loudon, springs to horse, and is rapidly ready to receive him, 67; uncommonly staff fighting; Regiment Bernburg doing wonders; Loudon sorely beaten, 68, 69; Daun and Lacy can do nothing on him, 70, 71; gathers up his spoil, and marches victorious; one of the succinctest of Kings, 72; takes Regiment Bernburg into favour again, 73; still utterly dark as to the course his enemies will take, 74; secure at last of Breslau, and of junction with Henri, 75; does not deceive himself with these bits of successes; letter to D'Argens, 76, 77; finds an unexpected recoil among his enemies, 80; beautifully marches and manoeuvres upon Daun and his chain of army-posts, 82, 83; worn down into utter weariness, sickness and disgust, 84, 85; hears that Berlin is seized, and hastens to its relief, 92; finding Berlin again free, he marches to Lübben, 98; interview with Gotzkowsky; 'Merchants' Bills a sacred thing,' 99; resolved to dare all things rather than sign a humiliating peace, 104; skilfully manoeuvres upon Daun, 104-107; marches towards Torgau, 108; determines to attack Daun's impregnable position, 113; arrangements and marchings, 114, 115; unexpected delays, 117; obliged to attack with but a fraction of his forces, 118; such a problem

as human bravery seldom had, 120; a Grandson of the Old Dessauer shot dead, 121; reinforcement and renewed effort, 122, himself wounded, 123; attack upon attack, but without adequate result, 124, 125; night sinks and nothing more can be made of it, 126; unexpected turn of affairs, and Daun in full retreat, 127-132; the campaign ended, 133; Friedrich takes to his winter-quarters, Leipzig, 134; sees all black, as if at the bottom of a tomb, 135, writes a sadly playful letter to his old friend Madame Camas, 136; his winter in Leipzig cheerfulest than expected; D'Argens and other faithful friends about him, 149; amuses himself with feeding his dogs, 150; always an appetite for a snatch of talk with anybody of sense, 151; interview and dialogue with Gellert, 152-158; resolves to retaliate on the Saxon plunderings at Berlin, 160, dialogue with General Saldern, who refuses to act contrary to his honour and oath, 161-163; sends Quintus Icilius, and banters him about it ever afterwards, 162, sends a small expedition to Langensalza, 164-169, levies contributions on Leipzig, 169; sends Madame Camas a porcelain box, 174; a King risen from the deeps again, more incalculable than ever, 180; his stoucal and manful figure of demeanour, 181, marches into Silesia for Loudon and the Russians, 183, 184; swift skilful manœuvres, 186, 187; tries to seize Kunzendorf, but finds Loudon too quick for him, 189; digs and entrenches his world-famous Camp of Bunzelwitz, 189-192; beaten here, he is beaten altogether, his last stronghold in the world, 193; constant vigilance, and expectation of attack, like an Arab Sheik among his tribesmen, 194; finds the Russian Army has given it up, and returned homewards, 197; sends General Platen to quicken their march, 197; stays a fortnight longer at Bunzelwitz, 199; gets very anxious about Colberg, 210; quits

Bunzelwitz, and loses Schweidnitz, 216-221; surprising inattention to the state of his Garrisons, 219; falls ill of gout, the inflexible heart of him at last like to break, 222; on march towards Strehlen, 224; lodges with Traitor Warkotsch, 225; a night-ride with Kappel for guide, 225, 226; narrowly escapes betrayal to the Austrians, 227-234; loses Colberg, 235, 236; a gloomy winter in Breslau, 238, 239, loses his English subsidy, puts more alloy into his currency, 249, all gift-moneys in abeyance, succeeds in raising his army to the necessary number, 250; grim letter to D'Argens; becoming wise by stripes, 251, tiff of quarrel with Prince Henri, 252-255, his darkest hour, and dawning of a brighter day, 257, 258; death of the Czarina, 258; finds a warm friend in Czar Peter, 258, 259; liberates all his Russian prisoners, 265, Treaty of Peace with the Czar, 266; the way out from destruction now a thing credible and visible to him, 267; hopeful letters, 267-270; opens his seventh campaign, with Daun, not Loudon, for enemy, 289, joined by Czernichef with a Russian reinforcement, 291, 292; makes unsuccessful attempts on Daun, 293; dismayed to hear that Czar Peter is murdered, and Czernichef recalled, 297, 298; storms Burkersdorf, and drives Daun clear of Schweidnitz, 299-303, his contempt for Lord Bute, 304, 322, 332; besieges Schweidnitz, 306; Battle of Reichenbach, 308, 310; Schweidnitz proves unexpectedly difficult, 311; gets it at last, and praises the Commandant for his excellent defence, 316; marches into Saxony, 317, congratulates Prince Henri on his victory of Freyberg, 326; truce with Austria, 328; visits Gotha; dialogue with Professor Putter, 330; terms of peace, 332; Austria tries to get his Rhine provinces, but cannot, 333, he ruthlessly pays-off all superfluous men, 334, treaty for general peace as good

as certain, 335, 336; dines with Kur-prince of Saxony, 343; home once more at Berlin; supper with the Queen and Court, 343; his part in World-History now played out, 347; reads no sign of the coming French Revolution, 348-352; his history henceforth interesting to Prussia chiefly, not so peculiar as to authorise much painting of character, 352; sets earnestly to work to repair his ruined Prussia, 357, 358; listens to the distresses of Nussler and company, and helps those who most need it, 360-363; rapidly restores his debased currency, 364; visits Westphalia with Duke Ferdinand, 365; dialogue with Roden, 366; picks up D'Alembert at Geldern, 368; second dialogue with Roden, 369; prouder of his victories over his social chaos than of his other victories, 370, has great difficulty in finding fit persons for his different employments, 373; obliges all the rich Abbays to establish manufactures, 374; induces the rich landlords to give up their encroachments on the poor farmers, 374, 375; D'Alembert's report of him, 376; he adopts the French Excise-system, much to the dissatisfaction of Prussia, 377-384; caricatured as a miser grinding coffee, 382; his method with the Caricature department of things, 382; procurator of the poor, 384, replies to the Douanier at Stettin, 385; account of his nephew's divorce, 386, 387; builds his *Neue Palais* of Sans Souci, 389, 390; affection for Lord Marischal, 391-394; shows kindness to Rousseau, 392; footfalls of departing guests, 395, 396; makes treaty of Alliance with Czarina Catherine, 398; corresponds with the Electress of Saxony about the Polish Crown, 407-413; takes little interest in the Polish quarrels, his one rule of policy to keep well with the Czarina, 424-429; alarmed at the suggestion of Prince Henri for King of Poland, 425; strives to dissuade the Turks from their Polish war with Russia,

442; dreads another European outbreak, 443, 444.

Friedrich II., vol. xxx., has a friendly visit from Kaiser Joseph, 5-9; suggests at Petersburg a cutting down of Poland, 11; pleasant visit from Electress Marie-Antoine, 11; fulminates a Royal Bull concerning eternal punishment, 12; makes a return visit to the Kaiser, Prince de Ligne's account, 15-26; would rather have London at his side than before him, 22; ceremoniously respectful to the Kaiser, 26; interview with Kaunitz on the Russian-Turk war, 33, 34; mediates with the Czarina, 35; she proposes dismemberment of Poland, 42; he gladly undertakes to negotiate the matter, 43-46; has his difficulties with Kaunitz, 44, 46; final agreement between the Partitioning Powers, 47, 48; no alternative left, but either that same Partition, or all Europe kindled into war, 49, at no pains to conceal his great sense of the value of West-Preussen to him, 50, 51; how he set to work, and what he made of it, 55-60; keeps an eye on Kaiser Joseph, 63; long dialogue with Zimmermann, 64, 69-74; receives a visit from his sister Ulrique, 76, 77; school improvements, 81, 82; sets out for his Silesian Reviews, 83, his later correspondence with Voltaire, 90; his annual Reviews, matters of rigorous business, 105, 106; Conway's account of him and them, 107-113; Major Kaltenborn's, 114-116; two famous anecdotes of him and Ziethen, 116, 117; suffers from a severe attack of gout, 118; the Kaiser thinking him dying marches on Brandenburg, 118; entertains Czarowitch Paul at Berlin, 120; expresses esteem for Pitt, 123, 125; correspondence with D'Alembert on the Kaiser's French tour, 133, 134, Cabinet-Order, with facsimile of Signature, 134, 135; forbids the Austrian attempt on Bavaria, 136; letter from Duchess Clement on the subject, 145; instantly gets to work, 145, 149; fruitless ne-

gotiations with Austria, 151; speech to his Generals, 152; marches to Silesia, 153; Kaunitz's high tone becomes notably altered, 155, 156; correspondence with the Kaiser, 157-159; highly unwilling to begin a war which nobody can see the end of, 160; crosses into Bohemia, 161; regardless of personal risks, 164; humour very sour and severe, 164, 166; letter from Maria Theresa, 164, 165; returns homewards, 168, 171; difficulties mediated by the Czarina, 172, 173; has put a spoke in Austria's proud wheel, and managed to see fair play in the Reich, 173; his second Law-Reform, 176; appoints Henckling to see justice done to Miller Arnold, 185; indignant at the Lawyers, 187, 188; orders the judges to appear before him, and passes judgment on *them*, 191-201; never neglected this part of his function, 204; still watchful of Austrian encroachments on the Reich, 209; produces a *Fürstenbund*, or general confederation of German Princes, 209, 243; an unaffectedly vigorous, simple and manful old age, 210; his old companions dropping off, 210; domestic anecdotes, 213, 214, industrial matters a large item in his daily business, 215; the strictest husbandman not busier with his farm than he with his Kingdom, 216; Prince de Ligne reports several pleasant interviews with him, 217-228; Marwitz's recollections, 229-236; Marquis de Bouillé's, 237-241, 247; severe letter to General Tauentzien on the state of the Silesian Army, 242, 243; Comte de Ségur's description of his appearance, 248; goes to his last Silesian Review, 251; takes severe cold, 253; returns to Potsdam, 253; increasing illness, 255; interview with Mirabeau, 256; cannot take his usual ride, 259; sends for Zimmermann, hoping to get relief, 262; does faithfully to the end the work that comes to hand, 267; his last day's work over, 268; his life-battle fought out, 269; the Last of the Kings, 271.—

'A Day with Friedrich,' 215, 275-298; day's drive through the Rhyn-Luch, and direct personal inspection, 276; many old remembrances, 277; agricultural improvements, 278, 292; personal kindnesses, 280, 291, 295, 296; interest for old Ziethen, 284; affectionate interview, 286-288; questions about the condition of the country and of the people, 289-293; satisfaction, and farther improvements, 295, 296; Fehrbellin, the Prussian Bannockburn, 297, 298.

Friedrich's Letters:—quality of, xxiii. 41, 299, 301, 321, 343, to Duhan, xxii. 57; his Father, 239, xxiii. 12, 49, 234, 266, 335, 339, 342, 363; his Mother, xxii. 309; xxvi. 98, 187; xxvii. 184; Wilhelmina, xxiii. 110, 112, 187, 227, 230, 233; xxiv. 335; xxvi. 354; xxvii. 94, 249-252, 291, 308-310, 318, 349; xxviii. 50; Hot-ham, xxii. 370, 372, 402; Grumkow, xxiii. 100, 103, 105, 145; Hacke, 147; Seckendorf, 148; Margraf Heinrich, 219; Madame Camas, 242; xxix. 136, 174, 267, 269; Groben, xxiii. 244; Karl of Brunswick, 269; Voltaire, 324, 361, 386; xxiv. 57, 89, 208; xxv. 327, 328; xxvi. 312, 313, 350, 393, 396, 397; xxvii. 305, 311; xxviii. 288, 326, 360, 372-375; xxx. 15, 49, 61, 88; Maupertuis, xxiv. 16; Jordan, 99, 153, 207, 212, 229, 306; xxv. 163; the Bishop of Liège, xxiv. 108, 109; Algarotti, 153, 230; Old Dessauer, 158, 293; xxvi. 7; Young Dessauer, xxiv. 288; August Wilhelm, 305; xxvii. 265; Duke Ferdinand, 44, 55; Podewils, xxvi. 44, 52, 55; Fouquet, 105, xxviii. 299; Prince of Prussia and Princess Amelia, xxvii. 55; Princess Amelia, 183; Schwerin, 91; Finckenstein, 124; xxviii. 187, 200, 229; xxix. 268; Duchess of Sachsen-Gotha, xxvii. 290, 294; xxviii. 288, 357; xxix. 331; Duc de Richelieu, xxvii. 281; D'Argens, 407; xxviii. 4, 134, 242, 243, 326, 346, 349, 391; xxix. 76, 85, 99, 103, 135, 251, 268-270; to an English lady, xxviii. 19; Prince Henri, 50, 159; xxix. 39-41, 85, 86, 253, 255, 313,

326, 337; xxx. 131; Daun (as if from Fermor), xxviii. 87; Lord Marischal, 126, xxix. 393, 394; Finck, xxviii. 230, 320; Schmettau, 231, 264, 273; Wunsch, 235; Prince Ferdinand, 287, 290; Zastrow, xxix. 222; De Launay, 384; Douanier at Stettin, 385; Electress Marie-Antoine, 407-413; xxx. 12, 13, 76; D'Alembert, 92, 133; Kaiser Joseph, 158; Täuentsien, 242; Duchess-Dowager of Brunswick, 265; Note on Toleration, xxiv. 17; the Strasburg Adventure, 66; Silesian Project, 156; Marginalia for Voltaire, xxv. 323, 326; quizzing Testimonial to Pollnitz, 366; his opinion of Traun, 441; of an Austrian Battalion, xxvi. 36; of D'Ahremberg, 118; account of straw sentry, 105; *Le Palladion*, 121; Speech to his Generals before Leuthen, xxvii. 373; closing paragraph of his 'History of the Seven-Years War,' xxviii. 142; on the ruined condition of Prussia at the close of the War, xxix. 371; account of the Prince of Prussia's divorce, 387; newspaper article, 432; on Russian and Turk tactics, 443; suggestion for cutting down Poland, xxx. 11; Speech to his Generals on occasion of the Bavarian War, 151.

Friedrich's Mother. See Sophie Dorothee.

Friedrich's Wife. See Elizabeth Christina.

Friedrich Wilhelm, Eleventh or Great Kurfürst, xxi. 55, 57, 59, 351; his wariness and dexterity, 352; gets Hinder-Pommern, 354; marches into Jülich, 355; his Polish-Swedish War, 356; essentially an industrial man, 359; character and portrait, 360; Battle of Fehrbellin, 361; beats the Swedes out of Preussen, 363, conquers Swedish Pommern, but cannot keep it, 365; his true Wife, Louisa of Nassau-Orange, 364, 367; his second Wife, Dorothea, 368; mutinies quenched out, 369; death, 370; how Austria settled his Silesian claims, 373: mentioned also, xxvi. 75, 327, 391; xxix. 371, 414.

Friedrich Wilhelm, King; as Crown-

Prince, xxi. 30, 41; taken to Hanover in childhood, 33; a rough unruly boy from the first, 37, 43, 64, 409; an abrupt peremptory young King, 399; his Spartan habits, 408; his Father's death, 409; the new King's house swept clear of mendacity and idle hypocrisy, 410; his 'strange wild ways, 413; love of justice, 415; xxii. 164; the first years of his laborious reign, xxi. 415; a 'man of genius,' fated to work in National Husbandry, 418, 442; xxii. 133, 138, 144; xxiii. 173; his tall Potsdam Regiment, xxi. 420; xxii. 13, 132; xxiii. 118, 422; the great Drill-sergeant of the Prussian Nation, xxi. 422; his faculty of minding his own business, 425; xxii. 50, 394, Portraits of him, xxi. 425; xxii. 221; xxiii. 139; personal habits, xxi. 427, no love for the French or their fashions, 429; Brobdignagian waggeries, 431; xxii. 176; an original North-German Spartan, xxi. 431; xxii. 32; charge of avarice, xxi. 433; xxii. 244; siege of Stralsund, xxi. 435, 443; regard for Charles XII., 441, 446; and original farewell Letter of Instructions, 441; makes his Will in favour of the Queen, 442; xxii. 39, 146; returns victorious, xxi. 448, 457; visited by Czar Peter, xxii. 3; Tutors selected for Fritz, 15; his notions about education, 18; fond of hunting, 24, 245; habits at Wusterhausen, 32; his Tobacco-Parliament, 34, 164 (see Tobacco-Parliament); alarming attack of 'nephritic cholic,' 39; interest in Cleve-Jülich, the Pfalz-Neuburg Heritage, 42, 122, 155, 438; xxiii. 352; interferes for the Heidelberg Protestants, xxii. 43; a King who stayed well at home, 51, 393; loses favour with the Kaiser, 51; disappointed with his son Fritz, 66; assists at the birth of Princess Amelia, 94; list of his Ten Children, 95; signs Treaty of Hanover, 122; is annoyed with the Double-Marriage Treaty, 129, 241 (see Double-Marriage); his recruiting difficulties and predatory

encroachments, 137, 209; George I. fires up, 143; surrounded by intrigues, 144; snared for the Kaiser by Grumkow and Seckendorf, 150 (see Grumkow); Treaty of Wusterhausen, 155, 189; 'possessed' as by two devils, 160, 189, 255, 281, 320, 405; horse-play with Gündling, 182; his irreverence for the Sciences and Fine Arts, 179; summary treatment of Wolf, 180; how Queen Sophie might have managed him, 191; his sorrow at the death of George I., 206; unsuspected tears in the rugged man, 206; hypochondriacal fits, 207; talks of abdicating, 210; visits King August at Dresden, 215, 333; dissolute entertainments, 217; singular mutual liking of the two, 221; Friedrich Wilhelm receives a return visit at Berlin, 224, increased dislike for his Son, 238, 303; contemptuous Letter to him, 240; a grand slaughter of wild swine, and what his Majesty did with the pork, 245; a bad attack of the gout, 246, 262; ill-treatment of his family, 254, 263, 281, 305, 308, 424; quarrels with George II., 266, 277; troubles of Mecklenburg, &c., 274; resolves to challenge George II. to single combat, 283; imminency of War between them, 285, 290; arbitration, 291, publicly canes the Crown-Prince, 309, 385, 405; will end the Double-Marriage speculation, 312; Wilhelmina to have Friedrich of Baireuth, 324; a conversation with Dubourgay, 338; jealous of the Crown-Prince, 339, 344; joyful reception of Hotham, 341; will not consent to Friedrich's marriage, 345; looks sour on Hotham, 359; apprised of Grumkow's treachery, but refuses to believe it, 364, 367; will agree to Single Marriage, not Double, 367; King August's Camp of Radewitz, 376; extraordinary conduct of Hotham, 395; passionate vexation with himself and others, 404; Journey to the Reich, 408; no taste for salutations in the market-place, 410; a Bridal-procession, 423, visits the Duke of Württemberg, 429; gives him

good advice, 434; visits Karl Philip, 436, 446; a simple dinner, 441; discovers Friedrich's attempt at flight, 445; suppressed rage, 447; visits Ernest Ludwig, 449; can suppress no longer, 452; summary orders, 453; visits Clement August, 454; letter home announcing arrest, 461; draws his sword upon his Son, 462; 'let him take the doom the Laws have appointed,' 463; arrives at Berlin, 466; almost mad at the turn things have taken, 467, receives a packet of fictitious Letters; assaults Wilhelmina in a frenzy of rage and disappointment, 467; no more negotiations with England, 473; cannot get to the bottom of the conspiracy, 474; wholesale punishments, 475; anxiety to save Friedrich's soul, 477; something of the nature of real prayer, 478; xxiii. 45; his conduct, looked at from without and from within, xxii. 479; xxiii. 6, distracted wanderings, xxii. 480; will have Katte and Crown-Prince tried by Court-Martial, 481, 484, Katte must die, 487, the King's troubled thoughts, xxiii. 6, spares his Son's life, 9; and even hopes to save his soul, 10; resolves on Wilhelmina's marriage, 16; preparations for her Betrothal, 20; never neglects public business, 25; the Salzburg Protestants, 25, 123; hangs Schlubhut for theft, 26; elk-hunting at Pillau, 28; cudgels his Criminal-Collegium, 31; excessively severe on defalcations, 32; reconciled to his Son, 42, 49; narrow escape from a bullet, 66; his Majesty's building operations, and infringements of Free-Trade, 67, 274; his store of silver, 74; takes Friedrich into favour, 77, 115; repentant love for Wilhelmina, 79; decides on a Bride for Friedrich, 95, his Letters, 97; receives the Salzburg Protestants at Berlin, 139; a man skilful in investments, 142; his Majesty visits the Kaiser, 144, 149; contempt for their ceremonials, 149, 155, dines at Prag with Prince Eugene, 158; meetings with the Kaiser, 161, 162; returns

home with new experiences of his high friends, 163; visits Wilhelmina, 165; passes Leipzig, 166; total change of mind towards the Kaiser, 170, 186, 274, a strange Session of the Tobacco-Parliament, 171; a ride with Seckendorf, 174, 261; passionate remorse, 175; interest in West Preussen, 180; rough banter with Wilhelmina, 182; provision for Friedrich on his marriage, 190, 281; small interest in the Polish Election, 198; connection with the Rhine Campaign, 215, 217; grants asylum to Stanislaus, 226; Friedrich still finds him difficult to please, 228; at Philipsburg, 236; steadily refuses to give up Stanislaus, 238, 263; falls seriously ill, 247; pleased with Friedrich's success in Preussen, 268; continued illness, 274, 376; fallen out with the Kaiser, 274, 353, 354; a visit to Loo, 358, 362, growing favour for Friedrich, 359, 387; renewed anxiety about his Heterodoxies, 367; Friedrich's testimony to his noble kingly qualities, 385; a new fit of illness, 388; the final shadows closing in upon him, 401, 408; his last Tobacco-Parliament, 410; how he shall stand justified before Almighty God, 411, 417, much affected at seeing his Son, 415; Instructions for his Funeral, 415; abdicates in favour of Friedrich, 416, 419; death, 421, his Spartan Funeral, 422; his dealings with the old *Stande*, xxiv. 42; his troubles about Herstal, 103, 105; though dead, still fights, 328; Law-Reform, xxvi. 191; the Great Elector, 75, 327, 391; mentioned, xxx. 170. Friedrich Wilhelm, Cousin of Friedrich, xxii. 35, 36 n., 235; xxiii. 220, 245, 251. Friedrich Wilhelm III.'s monument to Schwerin, xxvii. 181, 182, his parentage, xxix. 387, 388; boyish recollection of the Great Friedrich, xxx. 214. Friedrich Wilhelm, Prince (afterwards King), with Friedrich at Leipzig, xxix. 149; at siege of Schweidnitz, 313-4; Westphalia, 365; married to Eliza-

beth of Brunswick, 384; headlong, and dreadfully dissolute, 386, 387; divorce, and second marriage, 388; his curious deathbed, 394; at Friedrich's Silesian Reviews, 343; xxx. 113, 238: mentioned also, xxix. 150 n.; xxx. 5, 6, 13, 113, 204, 224. Friedrichfelde, xxiii. 39. See Carzig. Friendship, now obsolete, i. 116; an incredible tradition, 160, 225; how it were possible, 208, 284; in the old heroic sense, vii. 59. Friesack demolished, xxi. 203, 205, 363. Friesland, xxi. 376. Fritsch, Baron von, negotiates peace, xxix. 332, 335, 336. Fritz of Prussia, xix. 176. Fritz, M., xxx. 96. Fritzlär plundered and burnt, xxi. 124. Fromm's account of 'a Day with Friedrich,' xxx. 275-298; a man of excellent disposition, with a good stroke of work in him, 275; talks with the King, 281-296. Frost. See Fire. Fuchs, Dr., monument at Mollwitz, xxiv. 309. Fugger Anton, of Augsburg, viii. 259; Fuggers, the, xxi. 229, 244; xxii. 428. Fugleman, xxiv. 269. Fuller's *Ephemers Parliamentaria*, xiv. 66. Funccius of Nurnberg, xxi. 260. Funck, Sieur de, xxvii. 12, 13. Funerals, Cockney, xiii. 155. Furnes, xxv. 383. Fürst, Grand-Chancellor von, xxx. 176 n., 183, 188; dismissed by the King, 194; crowd of carriages offering sympathy, 198. Füssen, Peace of, xxvi. 42, 44. Futteral, Andreas and his Wife, i. 81. Future, organic filaments of the, i. 236; already extant though unseen, xiii. 308; England's Future, 330. See Past. GADARENES SWINERY, xi. 187. Gages, Señor de, xxvi. 199. Gainsborough relieved, xiv. 156, 163; xviii. 187. Gaisson, Count, at siege of Prag, xxv. 112.

- Galitzin, Prince, commands the Russian Army against the Turks, xxix. 444, 445; xxx. 10, 27; at Vienna, 172.
- Gallas, Austrian, xxi. 352.
- Gallissonnière, La, xxvi. 434; xxvii. 36; sails for Minorca, 38.
- Gallois, to La Vendée, iii. 272.
- Gallows, terror of the, x. 87; Dr. Francia's 'workman's gallows,' xi. 129.
- Gamain, Sieur, locksmith, informer, iv. 113.
- Game, in. 286.
- Garat, Minister of Justice, iv. 132.
- Gardes, Françaises, Suisses, Du Corps, &c.: see Guards.
- Gardot, Avocat, xxx. 13.
- Garve, Professor, xxx. 169: cited, xxvii. 244 n.
- Gathercoal's, Yankee, torch-gleams, xix. 396.
- Gaudi, Adjutant, at Rossbach, xxvii. 338, Hochkirch, xxviii. 104.
- Gazette, origin of the term, iii. 37.
- Gebhardus of Milan, xxi. 103.
- Geddard village, murder at, xvi. 117.
- Geddes, Jenny, and her stool, xiv. 97.
- Geese, with feathers and without, xiii. 187.
- Geldern, xxi. 304; xxii. 457; xxiii. 358.
- Gell, Sir John, notice of, xiv. 148.
- Gellert, Professor, a kind of oracle in his day, xxix. 151-153; his interview with King Friedrich, 154-158; his peaceful death, 159.
- Generals, Major-, their office, xvii. 132; names of, 155 n.; withdrawn, 255.
- Genius, the world's treatment of, i. 122; ever a secret to itself, viii. 333, 339; x. 243; what meant by, xiii. 107, 359; xxi. 28, 415, 418; xxii. 198. See Original Man.
- Genlis, Mme., account of, iii. 32; and D'Orléans, iv. 162, to Switzerland, 161.
- Gensonné, Girondist, iii. 256; to La Vendée, 272; arrested, iv. 201; trial of, 246.
- Gentleman, modern, and meagre Pattern-Figure, x. 4. See Respectability.
- George, Duke of Saxony, whom Luther thought so little of, xi. 274.
- George I. of England, xxi. 33, 441, 443; xxii. 3; the Pretender coming, 4; his Majesty visits Berlin, 23, 79; assists the Heidelberg Protestants, 48; English troubles, 82; first triumph of the 'Constitutional Principle,' 86, 204; consents to the Double-Marriagescheme, 88; Treaty of Hanover, 122; does not sign the Double-Marriage Treaty, 127; fires up at Friedrich Wilhelm's predatory recruitings, 143; his smoking-room, 165; not inclined for War, 197; death by apoplexy, on the road to Osnabrück, 201.
- George II. of England, xxi. 15, 161; as Prince of Wales, xxii. 83, 128; gives no help to the Double-Marriage scheme, 236; quarrels with Friedrich Wilhelm, 266, 276; his dapper self-satisfied character, 267; coerces the Duke of Mecklenburg, 274; discovers Grumkow's treachery, 320, 398; helps the Salzburg Protestants, xxiii. 142; his quarrel with the Prince of Wales, 345; his Wife's death, 347; in a conciliatory humour towards Friedrich, xxiv. 7; perplexed about his Spanish War, 51; described by Bielfeld, 53; thick-coming difficulties, 120; news of the Kaiser's death, 144, 149; against Friedrich, 270; assists Austria, 281, 351; distracted procedures, 377, 382; xxv. 3; a strange Curator of England, xxiv. 401; Austrian subsidy, xxv. 5; difficulty of moving the Dutch, 6, 254; of saving Hanover from War, 8; sees that Friedrich must be bargained with, 12, 33, 64; consequences of having a George II. for Chief Captain, 37, 339; can do no more for Austria, 69, 81, 105; tries a second time to draw his sword, 219; but to no purpose, 254; sword actually drawn, 274; at Dettingen, 284, 294; Conferences at Hanau, 300; receives Prince Karl, 306; projected invasion of Alsace, 313; Austria to take back Silesia, 317; Treaty of Worms, 337; French Treaty, 345; threatened with invasion, 364; litigation with Friedrich about Ost-Friesland, 373; his

- feelings, 391; rather a dear morsel for England, 420; difficulties in Highlands and Netherlands, xxvi. 56, 70, 114; agreement with Friedrich, 103, 112, 114, 115, 136; the Young Pretender in Edinburgh, 137; helps the Dutch, 217; hires Russian troops, 220, 224; Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 227; King-of-Romans Question, 419-421; Privateer difficulties with Friedrich, 426; deaf ear to Cameron's Wife, 427; feels that war with France is inevitable, xxvii. 21; refuses the French a passage through Hanover, 134; finds no help in Kur-Mainz, 138; anger at the Duke of Cumberland, 285; disgraces Lord George Sackville, xxviii. 197; his sudden death, xxix. 143; Smelfungus on, xxx. 126; mentioned also, xxv. 391; xxix. 135, 140.
- George III. of England, xxii. 297; xxvii. 289; becomes King of England, xxix. 144; his future Wife, 175; saves Queen Matilda of Denmark, xxx. 109.
- George, Markgraf. See Culmbach.
- George, Duke of Saxony, xxi. 288.
- George Friedrich of Culmbach, xxi. 248, 267, 288, 293; goes to Preussen, to administer, 306.
- George Ludwig, Bishop of Liège, xxiv. 105. See Affair of Herstal.
- George, Prince of Hessen-Cassel, xxv. 138, 276.
- George the Pious, of Liegnitz, xxiv. 225.
- George Wilhelm, Tenth Kurfurst, helpless amid the hot ashes of the Thirty-Years War, xxi. 333, 342.
- Georges-Cadoudal, in La Vendée, iv. 371.
- Georget, at siege of Bastille, ii. 237.
- Gera Bond, the, an excellent piece of Hohenzollern thrift, xxi. 284, 307, 371, 372; xxii. 413; the Salzburg Protestants at Gera, xxiii. 136; Friedrich delayed at, 227.
- Gérard, Farmer, Rennes deputy, ii. 177.
- Gerard, translator of 'Dialogues on Poland,' xxx. 61.
- Gerard's plot, xvii. 17; he is beheaded, 20.
- Gerber, xxii. 471, 486.
- Gerhard, Engineer-Lieutenant, xxix. 315.
- Gerlach, Reverend Herr, assists Kappel in saving Friedrich from betrayal, xxix. 231, 232, 233.
- Gerle, Dom, at Théot's, iv. 332.
- Germain, St., at Rossbach, xxvii. 337, 339, 344, 346; rapacity and insubordination of the French army, 361.
- German speculative Thought, i. 5, 14, 27, 31, 53; historical researches, 36, 72; meaning of term, iii. 136.
- German Literature, State of, vi. 33-100, foreign ignorance of, 36; charge of bad taste, 45; German authors not specially poor, 52; high character of German poetry, 74; charge of Mysticism, 53; Irreligion, 98; First era of German Literature, viii. 217, 295; physical science unfolds itself, 222, Didactic period, 225; Fable literature, 245; on all hands an aspect of full progress, 256; rudiments of a new spiritual era, 298; for two centuries in the sere leaf, ix. 154; German language, xxi. 398; Names, xxvi. 80, 153; Nation, the, xxvii. 346.
- Germany become honourably Prussian, xi. 341, Emperor of, Papist, xviii. 118.
- Germinal Twelfth (First of April), 1795, iv. 376, 377.
- Gersdorf, Baron von, takes the water from Arnold's Mill, xxx. 180; the King's Judgment, 194; Judgment reversed, 203.
- Gerund-grinding, i. 105.
- Gessler, General, at Hohenfriedberg, xxvi. 94, 97; sent to reinforce the Old Dessauer, 111, 160: mentioned also, xxix. 192.
- Gesta Romanorum*, the, viii. 246, 249.
- Geusau, Anton von, at Versailles, xxiv. 242, 253.
- Geyler, xxi. 361 n.
- Ghost, an authentic, i. 255.
- Gibbon's only instructions in Ancient War, xxviii. 163.
- Gibbons, Major, defeats Royalists, xv. 15.
- Gibraltar besieged, ii. 56; Cromwell's

- idea of, xvii. 183, 198, 199; Spanish siege of, xxii. 195, 201, 250.
- Gibson, Bishop, on Cromwell, xiv. 20.
- Gibson, cited, xxvi. 70 n.
- Gideon's fleece, xiii. 247.
- Giesebrecht, cited, xxix. 175.
- Gifted, the, xiii. 355.
- Gifts, patriotic, iv. 16.
- Gigmanity, literary, viii. 41; ix. 132.
- Gilge, xxi. 364.
- Gillespie, Rev. Patrick, interview with Cromwell, xvi. 148.
- Gin, the most authentic demon in our times, x. 355.
- Ginkel, General, xxii. 479; xxiii. 48, 150, 247; Dutch Ambassador to King Friedrich, xxv. 25, 29.
- Giordins, origin of term, iii. 256; in National Convention, iv. 92; against Robespierre, 94; on King's trial, 108, 127-131; and Jacobins, 111-13; formula of, 145 (see Mountain); favourers of, 154; schemes of, 156, 172; to be seized? 172; break with Danton, 184; armed against Mountain, 186; accuse Marat, 187; departments, 189; commission of twelve, 194; commission broken, 195; arrested, 200, 241; dispersed, 206; war by, 217; retreat of eleven, 220; trial of, 246; last supper of, 247; guillotined, 248; fate in history, x. 406.
- Gisors, Comte de, killed at Orefeld, xxviii. 48.
- Glamorgan, Vale of, xx. 19.
- Glasenapp, Grenadiers of, xxiv. 291.
- Glasgow, Assembly there, xiv. 104; Cromwell at, xvi. 90, 91, 147; riot in, 149; Thugs, x. 326, 354, 360.
- Glasnevin, in Ireland, xi. 383.
- Glatz, xxiii. 152; xxv. 126; captured by General Loudon, xxix. 35-37.
- Gleim, poet, canon of Halberstadt, xxx. 216, 275.
- Glenbucket, Laird of, xxvi. 427.
- Glencairn's rebellion in Highlands, xvi. 185; xvii. 13.
- Glenfinlas, xxvi. 114.
- Glinde, Albrecht, xxi. 219.
- Glogau, xxiv. 186, 199, 211; capture of, 287.
- Gloucester besieged, xiv. 169; relieved by Earl of Essex, 169; Cromwell's letters for defence of, xviii. 273, 288, 291.
- Glume, xxiii. 291.
- Glynn, Recorder, in the Tower, xiv. 317 n.; Chief-Justice on Committee of Kingship, xvii. 302.
- Gobel, to be Archbishop, iii. 11, 176; renounces religion, iv. 279; arrested, 311; guillotined, 323.
- Göbel, xxiii. 138.
- God, the unsleeping, omnipresent, eternal, i. 52; his Presence manifested to our eyes and hearts, 64; an absentee God, 157; the living, no cunningly-devised fable, ix. 291; judgments of, 338; forgetting, xiii. 171; his Justice, 238, 284; belief in, 275; proceeding 'to invent God,' 281.
- Goddard, Guibon, in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23; his narrative of, 49, 79, 80.
- Godlike, the, vanished from the world, viii. 362.
- Goethe, his inspired melody, i. 244; at Argonne, iv. 69; in Prussian retreat, 77-81; at Mentz, 223; intercourse and connexion with Schiller, v. 106, 114, 144, 271; his composure amid the Kantean turmoil, 131; his reverent and stubborn Realism, 271; his Introduction to the German Translation of Thomas Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, 293; pictorial criticism, vi. 73; his Poetry, 76; his Works, 233-299; his Autobiography, 289; unexampled reputation, 241; the Teacher and Exemplar of his age, 244; *Werter* and *Gotz von Berlichingen*, 247, 255; x. 252; his notions on suicide, vi. 260; *Wilhelm Meister*, 262-283; spiritual manhood, 283; singularly emblematic intellect, 285, a master of Humanity and of Poetry, 287; not a 'German Voltaire,' 290, 292; his faults, 294; Sketch of his life and works, 366-384, his prose, viii. 61; his intercourse with Schiller, 142; his Portrait, 379; his Death, 385-396; beginning of a New Era, 388; his Works, ix. 109-174; his greatness, 124; *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, 128, childhood and parentage,

- 133; his father's hatred of French Army, 136; beautiful Gretchen, 143; at Leipzig University, 144; studies for the Law, 146; the good Frederike, 148; his goodness and badness, 150; the German Chaos, 153; his first literary productions, 156; settles in Weimar, 157; inward life as recorded in his Writings, 159; tribute from Fifteen Englishmen, 161; his spiritual significance, 171; a contemporary of Mirabeau, x. 184; on Reverence and Education, xi. 324-327; his Mason's Song, 333; his notion about the Christian Religion, 370; non-vocal schools, 382 (see *Faust*, *Helena*, *Novelle*, *The Tale*, *Madame de Stael*); his 'characters,' xii. 123; notablest of literary men, 187; his last birthday, xx. 102; Epigram, 161; Sterling's gradual recognition of his worth, 155, 188, cannot find in him what he would expect in Jean Paul, 170, looks at him like a shying horse at a post, 180; his *Mason-Lodge*, xiii. 292, 293; influence on the German language, xxi. 398; *Hermann and Dorothea*, xxiii. 144; xxiv. 251; xxvii. 346; a boy at Frankfurt, xxviii. 146; his and his father's interest in the battle of Bergen, 151; his recollection of Gellert, xxix. 159; mentioned also, xxii. 451, xxix. 205 n.; xxx. 59, 92, 145, 270: cited, xxix. 159 n.
- Goffe, Major, exhorts at Windsor Castle, xiv. 337; is at Dunbar, xvi. 51; a Major-General, xvii. 155 n.; is in favour of Kingship, xviii. 79.
- Goguelat, Engineer, assists Louis's flight, iii. 197, 210-213 (see Chaiseul, Colonel-Duke); intrigues, 277.
- Goldlein, General, xxv. 316, 322.
- Goldsmith, vi. 250; ix. 86.
- Goltz, Colonel von der, accompanies the King to Silesia, xxiv. 178; dispatched to Prince Leopold of Glogau, 288; scalade of Glogau, 289, 292; secret Treaty of Klein-Schnellendorf, xxv. 70, 72, 87; shot at Prag, xxvii. 180.
- Goltz, General, under Prince of Prussia, xxvii. 254, not condemned with him, 263; defends Landshut, xxviii. 280, 301; chief post at Neustadt, 387, retires towards Neisse, 388, summoned by Loudon to surrender, 389; stubbornly repels every attack, and reaches his destination, 389; in Silesia, xxx. 81; reinforced to look after Loudon, 105, 132; flings himself upon his task in a way pleasant to look at, 182; taken with sudden fever and dies, 186.
- Goltz, Kammerherr von, goes to Petersburg, xxx. 265.
- Gompert, xxi. 417.
- Gondran, captain of French Guard, ii. 348.
- Good, growth and propagation of, i. 99; no good that is possible but shall one day be real, viii. 369; the good Man ever a mystic creative centre of Goodness, ix. 204; in Goodness the surest instinct for the good, 339; the working of the good and brave endures literally forever, x. 320. See Man.
- Goodman, Bishop, character of, xiv. 30.
- Goodson, Vice-Admiral, character of, xvii. 162; Cromwell's letter to, 163.
- Goodwin, Robert, M.P., sent to Charles I., xiv. 265.
- Goodwin, Rev. Thomas, preaches to Parliament, xvii. 24.
- Gorgas of Genser, xxx. 291.
- Goring, Lord, pardoned, xv. 121.
- Gorsas, Journalist, pleads for Swiss, iii. 370, in National Convention, iv. 63, his house broken into, 171, guillotined, first Deputy that suffers, 241.
- Gortz, xxii. 3.
- Gortz, Eustace von, employed by Friedrich in the Bavarian business, xxx. 146-148; Minister to Petersburg, 237.
- Gortz, General von, xxx. 146, with Friedrich, during his Rhyn-Luch inspection, 279, 280, 292.
- Gossip preferable to pedantry, xiii. 63; seven centuries off, 92, 97.
- Gotha, Sachsen-, Duke and Duchess of, visited by Friedrich, xxvii. 288, 289; brief account of them, 289, letters from Friedrich to the Duchess,

- 290, 294; xxviii. 288, 357; timber cut down by Reichs Army, 146; Duchess of, visited by Friedrich, xxix. 329; her death, 396; letter from Friedrich, 331.
- Gottfried, cited, xxii. 202 n.
- Gottsched's, Professor, interviews with Friedrich, xxvii. 315, 316; his wife a fine graceful loyal creature, 317; the King amused at his conceit, xxix. 331; Goethe's interview with, ix. 145; mentioned also, xxvii. 151, 157, 158.
- Gotter, Count, xxiv. 155, 194; Proposals to Austria, 201, 269; at Breslan, 277; at Princess Ulrique's Wedding, xxv. 355.
- Götting, Camp of, xxiv. 294; xxv. 8, 46.
- Götze, Kriegsrath von, xxvi. 444.
- Gotzinger, Wilhelm Lebrecht, xxvii. 107.
- Gotzkowsky, the good genius of Berlin, xxix. 92-97; interview with Friedrich about payment of ransom, 99; at Leipzig, 170, 172.
- Gough, cited, xxi. 133 n.
- Goujon, Member of Convention, in riot of Prairial, iv. 383; suicide, 385.
- Goupil, on extreme left, iii. 234.
- Gouvion, Major-General, at Paris, ii. 315; flight to Varennes, iii. 197, 199, 204; death of, 313.
- Governing, art of, xiii. 110, 112; Lazy Governments, 319; every Government the symbol of its People, 333.
- Government, Maurepas', ii. 49; bad state of French, 148; real, 269; French revolutionary, iv. 286, 309; Danton on, 318; true, the showing *what to do*, ix. 337; Offices, who made our, xix. 124; beautiful notion of No-Government, 169; Phantasm Governors, 260.
- Grafigny, Madame de, xxiii. 318 n.: cited, xxvi. 213 n.
- Grahame, Colonel, xxix. 179.
- Grammont, Duke of, xxv. 290; killed at Fontenoy, xxvi. 60, 69.
- Granpian Hills, Charles II. flies to, xvi. 87.
- Granaries, Public, xxiv. 11.
- Granby, Lord, at Minden, xxviii. 195; leads an attack at Warburg, xxix. 46; his portrait by Reynolds, 46; at Vellinghausen, 202, 203; character of his English troops, 206, 207, at Wilhelmsthal, 303; Amoneburg, 321.
- Grand, Le. See Grant.
- Grant, Lieutenant-Colonel, at Kolin, xxvii. 227; at Leobschütz, xxviii. 387.
- Grantham. See Battle.
- Granville, Earl. See Carteret.
- Graphic, secret of being, ix. 17; xii. 109.
- Grätz, Fortress of, xxiii. 372.
- Graun, the Brothers, xxiii. 290.
- Graun, the Composer, xxiv. 134.
- Graun, Kammergericht, Rath, xxx. 189.
- Grave, Chev. de, War Minister, loses head, iii. 308.
- Gravenitz, Countess, and the Duke of Würtemberg, xxii. 430; becoming much of a Hecate, 433; stowed away, 435; xxiii. 54.
- Gray, his Letters, vi. 251; his misconception of Norse lore, xii. 40; his Elegy quoted by Wolfe on the night preceding Quebec, xxviii. 304.
- Great Elector, the. See Friedrich Wilhelm.
- Great Men, i. 171; the Fire-pillars of the world, viii. 89, 389; ix. 55, 165; and Fire-eaters, x. 229; the Greatness of, ix. 112; x. 225; xiii. 249. See Man, Wisdom.
- Greek, Consecration of the Flesh, ix. 315; History, xi. 305, 306; Dramatic forms, xx. 258.
- Greenwood, Dr, Cromwell's letters to, xvi. 132, 134; xviii. 255.
- Gregg, Captain, xxx. 30.
- Grégoire, Curé, notice of, ii. 182; in National Convention, iv. 63; detained in Convention, 200; and destruction of religion, 279.
- Gregory Nazianzen, St., xxi. 50.
- Grenoble, riot at, ii. 130.
- Gresham College, Cromwell's letter to Governors of, xvii. 188.
- Grey of Groby, Lord, in Civil War, xiv. 148; assists in Pride's Purge, xv. 103; in prison, xvii. 129.
- Grey of Wark, Lord, commands Eastern Association, xiv. 128.

- Guibeauval, M., Engineer in defence of Schweidnitz, xxix. 307, 311-316.
- Grievances, writ of, ii. 152.
- Griffet, Father, xxx. 22.
- Grillparzer's, Franz, superior merits for a playwright, vii. 123, his worst Play, the *Ahnfrau*, 125; his *König Ottokars Gluck und Ende*, 128.
- Grimm and Diderot, ix. 263; visits Russia, xxx. 92.
- Grimnitz, Schloss of, xxi. 287.
- Grimston, Harbottle, after Restoration, xiv. 282.
- Groben, Lieutenant, xxiii. 121, 243.
- Groben, President von der, xxxix. 363.
- Grocers' Hall, dinner at, xv. 145.
- Gross, Russian Excellency, xxvi. 312, 317; xxvii. 12, 13.
- Grotkau, in Silesia, xxiv. 304; xxv. 29.
- Grove, Major, beheaded, xvii. 130.
- Grumkow, Baron, xxi. 399, 420, xxii. 217, a cunning, greedy-hearted, long-headed fellow, xxi. 400, sets a spy on Creutz, 450, challenged by the Old Dessauer, and humbly apologises, xxii. 147; introduces Seckendorf to Friedrich Wilhelm, 150; bribed by the Kaiser, 152, 161; he and Seckendorf Black-Artists of the first quality, 152; how they 'possessed' Friedrich Wilhelm, 160, 255, 281, 405; skilful manœuvres in the Tobacco Parliament, 169, 219, 243, 253, 275, 340, 344; deputation to the Queen, 314, 321; Cipher-Correspondence with Reichenbach, 318, 346, 360; their treachery brought home to them, and denied, 365, an intercepted Letter, 397; Grumkow interrogates Friedrich at Mittenwalde, 471; becoming almost too victorious, 474, 481; xxiii. 7; if the King should suddenly die on us, xxii. 482; xxiii. 7; Grumkow visits Friedrich at Custrin, xxii. 482; xxiii. 10; is one of the Court-Martial to try him, xxii. 485; correspondence with Friedrich, xxiii. 14, 95, 103-106, 145; deputation to Wilhelmina, 18; his account of the King's interview with Friedrich at Custrin, 42; receives a private report of Friedrich from Schulenburg, 51; introduces Friedrich to Wilhelmina, 76; with the King at his visit to the Kaiser, 153, 156, 159; visits Wilhelmina, 166; will have nothing to do with Kaiser's Double-Marriage project, 169; last interviews with the King of Poland, 177, 193.
- Grunberg, Burgermeister of, xxiv. 181.
- Grune, General, xxvi. 139; on march for Brandenburg, 141, 142; joins Rutowski in Saxony, 159; at Kesselsdorf, 163, 166.
- Guadet, Girondin, iii. 256; cross-questions Ministers, 298; arrested, iv. 201; guillotined, 249.
- Guards, Swiss, and French, at Réveillon riot, ii. 162; French, won't fire, 207, 212; come to Palais-Royal, 214; fire on Royal-Allemand, 220; to Bastille, 225, 238, 242, 243; name changed, 245, Lafayette and, 222; National, origin of, 210; number of, 227; Body, at Versailles, October Fifth, 332, fight there, 343; fly in Château, 348; Body, and French, at Versailles, 347; National, at Nancy, iii. 110; French, last appearance of, 244; National, how commanded (1791), 251, Constitutional, dismissed, 295; Filles-St.-Thomas, 315, 350; routed, 351; Swiss, at Tuileries, 357, 366; fire, 368; ordered to cease, destroyed, 369, 371; eulogy of, 371; Departmental, for National Convention, iv. 94.
- Guarini, Jesuit, and King of Poland, xxvi. 36; xxvii. 65, 123.
- Guasco, General, at Siege of Dresden, xxviii. 263; skilfully defends Schweidnitz, xxix. 306-316; obliged to surrender at last, and dies a prisoner, 316.
- Guastalla, Monsignore di, xxiv. 360.
- Gudowitsch, Adjutant, xxix. 265.
- Guhrauer, cited, xxii. 84 n.
- Guibert, Colonel, xxx. 91, 92.
- Guichard. See Quintus Icilius.
- Guildhall, scene at, xiv. 298.
- Guillams, Captain, slain, xiv. 235.
- Guillaume, Clerk, pursues King, iii. 216. See Drouet.
- Guillotini, Doctor, summoned by Paris Parlement, ii. 157; invents the guillotine, 178; deputed to King, 327,

- 337; at Louis's visit to Assembly, iii. 44.
- Guliotine, invented, ii. 178; described, iv. 13; in action, 240, 260, 267; to be improved, 333; number of sufferers by, 387.
- Guzot, M., criticised, xiv. 227 n.
- Gullibility, blessings of, i. 111.
- Gumbrecht, xxi. 249.
- Gundling, Jakob Paul, and his sublime long-eared erudition, xxii. 173; Friedrich Wilhelm's rough sport with him, 175; quarrels with Fassmann, 186; strange burial, 187: mentioned also, xxx. 170.
- Gunpowder, invention and benefit of, vin. 262, use of, i. 39, 174.
- Gurth, born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, xiii. 263, 303, 310.
- Gustaf, Adolf, the great, xxi. 333, 334, 341, 342, 345; xxvi. 234; xxvii. 334; dies, xiv. 72. See Sweden.
- Gustav III. See Karl Gustav.
- Gustav IV, xxx. 84 n.
- Guthry, Rev. James, interview with Cromwell, xvi. 148.
- Gutzmar, Mayor of Breslau, xxiv. 215, 218; xxv. 53, 57.
- Guyon, Captain, xxix. 315.
- HABELSCHWERT, Action of, xxvi. 10.
- Habit, how it makes dullards of us all, i. 54; the deepest law of human nature, xiii. 158. See Custom.
- Hacke's wedding, xxiii. 109; his advancement, 146, 150, 160, 418; letter from Friedrich, 147; Friedrich's regard for him, xxiv. 305; at Beraun, xxv. 403; in attendance on Friedrich, xxvi. 368.
- Hacker, Col., at execution of Charles I., xv. 106; routs Mosstroopers, xvi. 117, 118; Cromwell's letter to, 118.
- Haddick, General, in Berlin, xxvii. 279, 314, 319; defends Torgau, xxviii. 118; in the Lausitz, 167; to join with Soltikof, 170; attacked by Friedrich, 186; by Finck, 276; dismissed from service, 292.
- Haddington, Oliver Cromwell at, xvi. 15, 47.
- Haddock, Admiral, xxv. 233.
- Hagen, Minister von, xxix. 373.
- Hague, Friedrich's letters at the, xxx. 122 n.
- Hailes, Lord, character of, xvi. 146.
- Half-men, i. 178.
- Half-and-halfness, viii. 96; ix. 75, 292; the one thing wholly despicable and forgettable, 316.
- Halifax, Lord, xxvi. 433.
- Hall, Bishop, pamphlet of, xiv. 109.
- Hall, Captain of the Ship 'Dartmouth,' xxx. 94.
- Halle, University of, xxi. 379; controversy with Wolf, xxii. 180; the Salzburg Protestants at, xxiii. 137.
- Haller, Dr., xxx. 66, 72.
- Hamann, Customhouse clerk, xxix. 377.
- Hameln, xxi. 339.
- Hammersleben, xxii. 48.
- Hamilton, Duke James, flies to King, xiv. 174; taken, 265; prepares an army, 324; his army ready, xv. 15; defeated at Preston, taken at Uttoxeter, 18-42; escapes, and is retaken, 114; condemned, 120; executed, 121.
- Hamilton, Duke William, succeeds his brother, xv. 122, taken at Worcester, xvi. 179; dies, 181.
- Hammond, Lieut.-Gen., summoned by Commons, xiv. 285; no ice of, 314.
- Hammond, Col. Robert, at Bristol siege, xiv. 236; the King flies to, 312; character of, 314; provided for, 329; letters from Cromwell to, 316, 329; xv. 94.
- Hammond, Dr., King's chaplain, xiv. 315.
- Hampden, John, xi. 139; xii. 246; his mother, xiv. 29; a Puritan, 54; ship-money, 75, 94; trial of, 98; is Colonel in Parliament Army, 127; impatient, 141, 143; proposed as Lord General, 152; mortally wounded, 155; Cromwell to, on Ironsides, xviii. 14; his coffin opened, xiii. 149.
- Hampton-Court Conference, xiv. 38, 39. See Charles I.
- Hanau, Conferences at, xxv. 300, Belleisle at, xxvi. 18.
- Hand, Mr., Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 178.
- Hanover, Electorate of, xxi. 34; Linden Avenue at, 47; Treaty of, xxii.

- 122, 149, 155; our Hanover Series of Kings, 204.
- Hanover, Convention of, xxvi 103, 112, 114, 136, 170.
- Hanoverian difficulties, George II.'s, xxv. 8, 81, 255; little profit from her English honours, xxvii. 30.
- Hanway, Sir Jonas, xxvi. 264, 265, 322 cited, xxiv. 26 n.; xxvi. 265 n.
- Happiness, the whim of, i. 183.
- Happiness-controversy, the foolish, viii. 114; illustration of the 'Greatest-Happiness' principle, ix 348.
- Happy, pitiful pretensions to be, xiii. 192; happiness of getting one's work done, 195. See Unhappy.
- Hapsburg Kaisers. See Rudolf.
- Hapton parishioners, letter concerning, xiv. 260.
- Harcourt, Duc d', xxv. 172, 224.
- Hardenberg, Prince, xxx. 229.
- Hardwicke, Lord, xxvii. 202; xxix. 144, 149.
- Hare, Archdeacon, and his Biography of Sterling, xx. 2; his testimony to Sterling's high character, 38; their opportune meeting at Bonn, 115; Sterling becomes his Curate, 116; a welcome fellow-labourer, 124.
- Haren, Van, xxv. 251.
- Harley, Col., Presbyterian, xiv. 284; xv. 103.
- Harrach, Count, xxvi. 176, 177; xxvii. 5.
- Harrington, Sir James, Cromwell's letter to, xv. 148.
- Harrington, James, author of *Oceana*, xiv. 331.
- Harrington, Lord, xxii. 251, 387; xxiv. 52, 86; xxv. 3; tries to negotiate peace, xxvi. 112.
- Harris, Excellency, xxx. 122.
- Harris's Life of Cromwell, xiv. 90 n.
- Harrison, Thomas, notice of, xiv. 26; at Basing siege, 248; at Preston, xv. 31; Major-Gen., in Scotland, xvi. 168; Letter to, by Cromwell, xvii. 247 (*App.*); at Conference at Speaker's, xvi. 200-201; at disbanding of Rump, 223, 224; in Council of State, 271 n.; Anabaptist, dismissed, xvii. 3; and Fifth Monarchy, 33; in prison, 129, 298.
- Harsch, General, defends Prag, xxv. 400, 403; obliged to surrender, 406; to remain near Silesia, xxviii. 82, 84, 89; hurries homewards, 116; attacks Landshut, 279; with Loudon at capture of Glatz, xxix. 36.
- Hartfell, Lord, in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23.
- Harthb, Samuel, letter on dissolution of Cromwell's Second Parliament, xviii 144.
- Hartmann, Herr von, xxiv. 355.
- Hartoff, Herr von, xxii 286.
- Harvey, on Cromwell's death, xviii. 162-171.
- Haselrig, Sir Arthur, one of the Five Members, xiv. 123; Governor of Newcastle, xv. 69, 70, Cromwell's letters to, xvi. 36, 55, 56 n., 57 n.; xvii 239, 240; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23; opposed to Cromwell, 80; in Cromwell's Second Parliament, 204, excluded, 254; readmitted, xviii 100; one of Cromwell's Lords, 101; sits in the Commons, 113, 137; his death, 134 n.
- Haslang, xxvi. 42.
- Hassan-Bey, in the Turkish fleet, xxx. 30.
- Hassenfratz, in War-office, iv. 98, 104.
- Hastenbeck, Battle of, xxvii. 261, 262.
- Hastings, Mr., for the King, xiv. 148.
- Hat, perambulating, seven-feet high, xiii. 177.
- Hater, a good, still a desideratum, vii. 29.
- Hatred an inverse love, ix. 113; of scoundrels, the backbone of all religion, xix. 84; Divine Hatred, 92.
- Haude, Bookseller, and the *Mercury* newspaper, xxiv. 18.
- Hautcharmoi, General, xxvi. 47, 72, 106.
- Havelberg, xxii. 5; xxiii. 138.
- Haverfordwest, Cromwell's letters to Mayor of, xviii. 217, 218.
- Havre-de-Grace attacked by Rodney, xxviii. 179.
- Hawke, with a Channel Fleet, watches Vannes, xxviii. 180, 254-256; utterly ruins Confians's fleet, 341-345.
- Hawley, General, xxv. 297.

- Harthausen, Count, Danish Ambassador at Petersburg, xxix. 285.
- Hay, Lord Charles, at Fontenoy, xxvi. 63; quizzes Lord Loudon, xxvii. 204.
- Haynes, Col., Deputy Major-Gen., xvii. 155 n.; apprehends poet Cleveland, 174.
- Hazlitt, viii. 363.
- Healing Art, the, a sacred one, xiii. 5.
- Health, meaning and value of, x. 231, 245; the highest temporal good, xi. 330.
- Heart, a loving, the beginning of knowledge, ix. 18, 119.
- Heath, James, 'Carriion Heath,' his *Life of Oliver Cromwell*, xi. 140; on Cromwell, xiv. 16, 17.
- Heaven and Hell, our notions of, xiii. 181.
- Heaven's Chancery, xiii. 236, 242.
- Heavy Peg, xxi. 203, 422.
- Heavyside, the solid Englishman, xix. 17, 337.
- Hébert, Editor of 'Père Duchesne,' iii. 133; signs petition, 237 (see 'Père Duchesne'); arrested, iv. 194; at Queen's trial, 243; quickens Revolutionary Tribunal, 246; arrested, 310; guillotined, 314; as also his widow, 323.
- Hecht, Prussian Secretary, xxvi. 445.
- Hedwig, Grandmother of Peter III., xxix. 261.
- Heeren, Professor, and his rub-a-dub style of moral-sublime, vii. 75.
- Heffner, Kapellmeister, xxix. 332.
- Heidelberg Protestants, xxii. 39.
- Heiden, Col., defends Colberg, xxviii. 80.
- Heilbronn, xxii. 443; xxv. 384.
- Heilsbronn, xxi. 107, 335; xxii. 419.
- Heinrich Friedrich, Cousin of Friedrich, xxii. 35, 36 n.; xxiii. 219, 245, 340, 342; xxiv. 23.
- Heldenbuch*, viii. 152; specimen of the old poetry, 155; connection with the *Nibelungen*, 162.
- Helden-Geschichte*, cited, xxii. 376 n.; xxvii. 134 n.; xxix. 15 n.
- Helena*, Goethe's, a dainty little Phantasmagoria, vi. 171; half-literal, half-parabolic style, 173, is part of a continuation of *Faust*, 178; introductory Notice by the Author, 191; condensed elucidatory sketch of the poem, with extracts, 194-196.
- Hell, real, of a man, xiii. 85; of the English, 182, 334; Sterling's desire for earnest well-doing, were it even in, xx. 133, 264; no perdition so perilous as a faithless lying spirit, 130.
- Helvetius's game-preserves, ix. 266; he arranges an Excise-system for Prussia, xxix. 377.
- Hénault, President, on Surnames, ii. 1; xxvi. 208.
- Henderson, Sir John, renegade Scot, xiv. 147, 180.
- Henderson, cited, xxv. 315 n.; xxvi. 40 n.
- Hengst and Horsa, ix. 224; x. 387.
- Henkel, Count, at Berlin, supper with the Queen Mother, xxiv. 30.
- Hennersdorf, Fight of, xxvi. 151-153.
- Hennert, cited, xxiii. 284 n.
- Henri II., xxiv. 347.
- Henri, Prince, with the King at Aachen, xxv. 216; marches upon Prag, 394; at Tabor, 425, at battle of Hohenfriedberg, xxvi. 94, at Pymont, 189; Demon-Newswriter's account of, 376; at battle of Prag, xxvii. 171, 172, 176, 180; in retreat, 237, 241; with the King, 263; a grudge of peculiar intensity, 267; enters Erfurt, 287; at Gotha, 288; Friedrich's high opinion of him, 291; xxviii. 296; slightly wounded, xxvii. 349; to guard Saxony, 366, xxviii. 29, 82; visits Wilhelmina, 34; at Tschopau, 47; letter from Friedrich, grieving for Wilhelmina, 50; secret Paper of Directions, 51; at Gross Seidlitz, 84, 85; suddenly posts himself on the heights of Gahmig, 85; with Friedrich in Dresden, 88; on march for Neisse, 114; dispatches Knobloch to clear Erfurt, 146; swift work on the Austrian Magazines, 152, 153; congratulated by Friedrich, 159; called away from Saxony, 166; at Bautzen, looking after Loudon and Haddick, 181; at Schmottseifen, 183; hears of the Kunersdorf disaster, 240; at

- Sagan, looking after Daun, 279, 282; makes extraordinary exertions, 282; moves southward after the Austrian Magazines, 283; march of fifty hours from the Landskron to Hoyerswerda, 293-95; captures Hoyerswerda, 295; 'the only one who never committed a mistake,' 296; beautifully outmanœuvres Daun, 302; defeats D'Ahremberg at Pretsch, 302; judiciously pricks into Daun; meeting with Friedrich, 314; advises the slow and sure method, 315; threatening to resign, 390; to look after the Russians and Silesia, xxix. 5; cannot see his way to attack, 7, 38; correspondence with Friedrich; mutual dissatisfaction, 39-41; makes one of his winged marches, and saves Breslau, 51; crosses Oder, to watch Soltikof, 59; out of health, nurses himself in Breslau and Glogau, 81; letters from Friedrich, longing for his return, 85, 86; presents his horse to Gellert, 159, 256; takes charge of Saxony against Daun, 185, 199; driven into straiter quarters, 237; tiff of quarrel with Friedrich, 252-255; writes to Eichel, 254; brilliant successes in Saxony, 256; letters from Friedrich, 313; attacked by Stollberg and driven from Freyberg, 317; defeats Stollberg in battle of Freyberg, 323; letter to Friedrich, 324; goes home to recruit his health, 329; letter from Friedrich, 337, 338; Friedrich forbids him the offer of the Polish Crown, 425; with Friedrich at the visit of Kaiser Joseph, xxx. 5, 6; visits his Sister the Queen of Sweden, 14, 38; visits the Czarina, sumptuous entertainments at Petersburg, 39-42; Czarina proposes the dismemberment of Poland, 42; again at Petersburg, 121; in the Bavarian War, 161; visits Paris, 241: mentioned also, xxvi. 237; xxvii. 19, 123; xxix. 388; xxx. 238, 247.
- Henri, Prince, Friedrich's Nephew, with him at Leipzig, xxix. 149; his good opinion of him, 388; xxx. 72.
- Henri II. of France, xxi. 265.
- Henri IV., xxi. 317, 321.
- Henriot, General of National Guard, iv. 196, 199; and the Convention, 200; to deliver Robespierre, 347; seized, rescued, 347, 348; end of, 351.
- Henry II. choosing an Abbot, xiii. 99; his Welsh wars, 135; on his way to the Crusades, 144; our brave Plantagenet Henry, 302; his daughter married to Henry the Lion, xxi. 106.
- Henry VIII., xiii. 123; xxi. 303.
- Henry, Prince, death of, xiv. 41.
- Henry IV., Kaiser, xxi. 90.
- Henry VII., Luxemburg Kaiser, xxi. 150, 197, poisoned in sacramental wine, 151; his descendants, 165.
- Henry the Fowler, beginning of German Kings, xxi. 72; his six Markgraviates, 74; a valiant son of Cosmos, 75, xxiv. 346.
- Henry the Lion, xxi. 95, 106.
- Henshaw, Major, in Gerard's plot, xvii. 17.
- Henzi, Conspirator, of Berne, xxvi. 380.
- Heptarchy, the, xi. 339.
- Herbert, Philip, and James Ramsay, xi. 220.
- Herbert, Col., at Bristol siege, xiv. 238; in Wales, xv. 8.
- Herbert, Lord, afterwards Duke Beaufort, xvi. 143, 144; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 22.
- Herbois, Collot d', notice of, iii. 25; in National Convention, iv. 63; at Lyons massacre, 270, 271; in Salut Committee, 287; attempt to assassinate, 328; bullied at Jacobins, 344; President, night of Thermidor, 348; accused, 374; banished, 376; at Surinam, 385.
- Hercules, xiii. 225, 255.
- Hercules-Harlequin in the Foreign Office, not pleasant to think of, xix. 109.
- Herder, viii. 61; ix. 151.
- Héritier, Jérôme I', shot at Versailles, ii. 345.
- Hermann, cited, xxix. 263 n.
- Heroes, Universal History the united biographies of, xii. 3, 34; how 'little critics' account for great men, 16; all Heroes fundamentally of the same

- stuff, 33, 52, 94, 137, 183, 225; Heroism possible to all, 151, 171, 208; Intellect the primary outfit, 124; no man a hero to a *valet-soul*, 216, 247, 256.
- Heroic poems and heroic lives, vii. 69; viii. 8; ix. 311; heroic promised land, xiii. 45, heroic and unheroic ages, xiv. 83.
- Heroine-worship, viii. 100; x. 310.
- Heroism, Puritan, xiv. 3, 11.
- Heroisms, why not done now, xi. 237.
- Hero-worship, the corner-stone of all society, i. 242; perennial in the human bosom, ix. 38, x. 213; almost the only creed that can never grow obsolete, ix. 114; the tap-root of all religion, xii. 14-19, 51, ever-during in man, 17, 100, 150, 241; xiii. 41, 70, 150, 153, 282, 305, 352; what Heroes have done for us, 165, 179; nature of, xix. 333; a man's 'religion' the *practical* Hero-worship that is in him, 335, 400; a thrice-lamentable, xxv. 389, 392. See Religion.
- Herrenhausen, xxii. 88.
- Herrnhuth, founded by Count Zinzendorf, xxvi. 147, 154
- Herrnstadt burnt by Soltikof, xxvii. 300.
- Herstal, xxiii. 354; the affair of, xxiv. 87, 95, 101.
- Hertzberg at Congress of Hubertsburg, xxix. 336; with Friedrich in his last illness, xxx. 259, 265, 269: mentioned also, 68, 130, 157, 165, 172, 244.
- Hervey, Lord, xxii. 283; cited, 284 n.
- Herzen, cited, xxix. 263 n.
- Hesse, poor old, his sad end, xxiii. 32.
- Hessen-Darmstadt, Prince of, joins the Reichs Army, xxvii. 246.
- Hessian troops in Scotland, xxvi. 40; in England, xxvii. 37, 38.
- Heterodoxy and Orthodoxy, iii. 194.
- Hencking, Colonel, xxx. 185.
- Heuschrecke and his biographic documents, i. 11; his loose, zigzag, thin-visaged character, 23; unaccustomed eloquence, and interminable documentary superfluities, 72; bewildered darkness, 285.
- Hewit, Dr., plot and execution of, xviii. 145-147.
- Hewson, Col., at Langford House, xiv. 252; at Tredah, xv. 178; Governor of Dublin, 281, joins Cromwell in the South, 283, 284, one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Heyde defends Colberg, xxix. 79, 87; thanks from the King, 88; third siege, 210-215; utterly starved out, and honourably surrenders, 235, 236.
- Heylin, lying Peter, xiv. 71.
- Heyne, Life of, vii. 75-114; parentage, boyhood and extreme penury, 78; a poor incipient gerund-grinder, 82; a school-triumph, 84, miseries of a poor scholar, 86; his edition of Tibullus, 92, first interview with Theresa Weiss, 94; driven out of Dresden by the Prussian bombardment, 96; marries, 99; his Wife's devoted courage, 99, appointed to a professorship in Gottingen, 100; his Wife's death, 105; marries again, 106; University labours, 108; death, 110; successful struggle with adversity, xi. 319
- Heywood, General, at Brussels, xxv. 276.
- Hierarchy of Beneficences, xix. 313, 329; Religion the parent of social Hierarchies, 332; England once a Hierarchy, 343, 388. See Aristocracy.
- Hierusalem, Rev. M., cited, xxix. 205 n.
- Higgins, General O', Director of Chile, xi. 76
- Highgate Hill, a view from, xx. 64.
- Hildburghausen, Prince of, xxiii. 350; takes command of Reichs Army, xxvii. 246; Rossbach, 326, 327, 329, 342, 343; retreat by Naumburg; flings down his truncheon, and goes home, 345.
- Hildburghausen, Duke of, xxvii. 245.
- Hildebrand, Pope, xxi. 90.
- Hildebrandt, cited, xxiv. 85 n.; xxx. 276 n.
- Hildorf, Kreis-Commissariat, xxvii. 357, 360.
- Hill, Dr. Thomas, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, Cromwell's letter to, xiv. 313.

- Hill, William, notice of, xv. 49.
 Hille, xxiii. 38, 40.
 Hills, Henry, printer to Protector, xvii. 92.
 Hilsden House taken, xiv. 185.
 Himmelstädt, xxiii. 39.
 Hinchinbrook House, xiv. 24; sale of, 56; Charles I. at, 288.
 Hipposley, Sir John, sent to Charles I., xiv. 265.
 Hirsch, the Voltaire-Lawsuit, xxvi. 289, 310.
 Hispaniola, failure of attack on, xvii. 158, 159.
 Historians, character of good, xiv. 9; labour of, 14.
 History, all-inweaving tissue of, i. 19, by what strange chances do we live in, 47; a perpetual revelation, 171, 185, 245; methods of writing, v. 112, 119; on, vii. 345-359; basis of all knowledge, 345; vain Philosophies of, 345; ix. 6; the more important part of, lost without recovery, vii. 349; viii. 89; artists and artisans of, vii. 353; infinity, 354; ix. 260, the history of a nation's Poetry the essence of its entire doings, viii. 292; History the essence of innumerable Biographies, ix. 6; the true Poetry, 44; what things are called 'Histories,' 45; x. 5; on History again, ix. 215-225; the Message from the whole Past to each man, 217; Universal History the Autobiography of Mankind, 222; the grand sacred Epos, or Bible of World-History, 313; Scott's Historical Novels, x. 274, unspeakable value of contemporary memoirs, xi. 37; of a sincere Portrait, 241, who is a historical character, 249; study of, 305; philosophical, xiii. 297, 298; of Puritanism, its difficulties, xiv. 3-11; of England, in a strange condition, xix. 388, 388, all, an imprisoned Epic, Psalm and Prophecy, xxi. 22; fleeting rumours of, 89, use of, xxiii. 116; of the Seven-Years War, by the Royal Staff Officers, cited, xxvii. 162 n.
 Histriomastix See Prynne.
 Hitch, Rev. Mr., Cromwell's letter to, xiv. 184.
 Hitzig's Lives of Hoffmann and Werner, vi. 105.
 Hoadly, Bishop, xxvi. 428.
 Hoare, cited, xxviii. 21 n.
 Hobart, Col. Sir Miles, xiv. 147.
 Hoche, Sergeant Lazare, in Bastille time, ii. 213; General against Prussia, iv. 296; pacifies La Vendée, 370.
 Hochkirch, and its environs, xxviii. 92; battle, 96-109; Hochkirch Church, 112.
 Hochstädt, xxi. 377.
 Hocke, Baron von, deputation from Grunberg, xxiv. 180.
 Hodgson, Capt., character of, xv. 18; in Scots War, xvi. 11, narrative by, 14.
 Hof, xxi. 160; xxiii. 226.
 Hoffman, Colonel, killed at Dresden, xxviii. 265.
 Hoffmann's quick eye and fastidious feelings, vi. 141; his life, character and writings, 339.
 Hoffmannswaldau, Silesian poet, xxiv. 176.
 Hofmann, Brunswick Envoy, xxvi. 251.
 Hohenfriedberg, xxvi. 82, 83; battle of, 89-99.
 Hohenlohe, Reichs-Furst von, xxvii. 189.
 Hohenstauffen Emperors, last of the, viii. 218; Dynasty, xxi. 91; tragic end of the, 131, 133.
 Hohenzollerns, the Brandenburg, and their talent for annihilating rubbish, xi. 279; xxii. 412; Burggraves of Nürnberg, 106, xxii. 418, a thrifty, steadfast, clear-sighted line of men, xxi. 109, 130; how they obtained Baireuth and Anspach, 129; Burggraviate made hereditary, 181; farther acquisitions, 156; become connected with Brandenburg, 160, 178; become Kurfürsts, 201, contrast between guidance and no-guidance, 208, not worshippers of Beelzebub, 209; not speckless paragons of all the virtues, 212; their practical notions of Fair-play, 360; the Twelve Hohenzollern Electors, 386; National Drill-sergeants, 423; Prussia's debt to her Hohenzollern Kings, xxix. 355. See Brandenburg, Prussia.
 Holbach, Baron d', ix. 267, his Philo-

- sophes and Philosophesses, 275; xxx. 15.
- Holberg, cited, xxi. 277 n.
- Holborn, General, invites Cromwell to Edinburgh, xv. 78; at Dunbar battle, xvi. 42 n.
- Holderness, Lord, making for Venice, xxv. 419: mentioned also, xxvii. 184.
- Holland, Earl, at Kingston, xv. 14; condemned, 120; executed, 121.
- Holland House, xiv. 298.
- Holland, invaded by Prussia, 1787, ii. 111; a Stadtholder chosen for, xxvi. 217, 218. See Dutch.
- Hollar, Wenceslaus, taken at Basing, xiv. 250.
- Holle, cited, xxi. 128 n.; xxvi. 415 n.
- Holles, John, and his quarrel with Ger-vase Markham, xi. 215.
- Holles, Denzil, holds down the Speaker, xiv. 67; imprisoned, 67; Presbyter-ian, 284; a leader in Parliament, 287. See Members, Eleven
- Holmby, Charles I. at, xiv. 260, 274.
- Holstein, xxi. 439, 448.
- Holstein-Beck, Prince of, xxi. 381; accompanies King Friedrich into Si-lesia, xxiv. 178; at Frankenstein, 296, 301.
- Holstein, Prince George of, xxix. 279.
- Holstein, Prince von, at siege of Dres- den, xxix. 28, 31; in Battle of Tor- gau, 115, 118, 124.
- Holstein-Plön, Duke of, xxix. 147.
- Home Office, William Conqueror's, xix. 126; the Home Office our grand primary concern, 189, 196.
- Home-poetry, vii. 17, 36.
- Homer, vii. 24; viii. 209; his *Iliad*, i. 217; xiv. 7; a Ballad *History*, xix. 387; xxi. 23.
- Hompesch, Baron von, xxii. 141.
- Hondschooten, battle of, iv. 295.
- Hooke, Alderman, notice of, xvi. 9.
- Hoop, Père, ix. 275.
- Hope, this world is emphatically the place of, i. 156; false shadows of, 179; and Man, ii. 48; sometimes a godlike thing, xxvii. 372; very beau- tiful, sometimes even when fallaci- ous, xxviii. 379.
- Hope's, Mr., *Essay on the Origin and Prospects of Man*, viii. 364.
- Hopfgarten, General, and his compli- mentary balderdash, xxii. 410.
- Hoppe, cited, xxii. 271.
- Hopton, Sir Ingram, at Winceby, xiv. 181.
- Hopton, Sir Ralph, character of, xiv. 242.
- Hordt, Colonel of the Prussian Free- Corps, xxvii. 191; sharp on the Cos- sacks, xxviii. 47; charge of baggage during battle of Zorndorf, 61; taken prisoner to Petersburg, 281; at Pe- tersburg, xxix. 265, 271; hears in his prison of the accession of Peter III., 273, presented at Court, 273; sees the deceased Czarina lying in state, 277; sups with the Czar, 278; with the Czarina, 279; paid off, at close of the war, 335.
- Hormayr, cited, xxi. 150 n.; xxiii. 87 n.; xxiv. 355 n.; xxv. 388 n.; xxvii. 160 n.; xxix. 317 n.
- Horn, cited; xxi. 59 n.
- Horn's, Franz, merits as a literary his- torian, vi. 38.
- Hornoi, M. d', xxx. 100.
- Horse, the, his own tailor, i. 53; when willing to work can find food and shelter, x. 345; *Laissez-faire* ap- plied to, 352; able and willing to work, xiii. 28; Goethe's thoughts about, 197, wooden, described, xv. 130; Farmer Hodge's horses quite emancipated, xi. 195; xix. 31; the horse's 'vote,' 294.
- Horse Artillery first introduced by Friedrich, xxviii. 160.
- Horsemanship, Gaucho, xi. 100.
- Horst, Minister von der, xxix. 373.
- Horton, Col., defeats Welsh, xv. 4; dies, 207.
- Hôtel des Invalides, plundered, ii. 232.
- Hôtel de Ville, after Bastille taken, ii. 242; harangues at, 248; nearly fired by women, 316; Louis in, 359.
- Hotham, Capt., doings and arrest of, xiv. 155.
- Hotham, Sir Charles, English Envoy to Prussia, xxii. 337; welcomed at Berlin, 341; dinner with the King, 341; his Despatches, 356, Double- Marriage scheme as good as ended, 367, 369; amazing interview with

- the King, 395; no choice but to return home at once, 400.
- Hothams, the, executed, xiv. 280.
- Houchard, General, unsuccessful, iv. 233, 295; guillotined, 265.
- Howard's, Dr., Letters, xvii. 147 n.
- Howard, Col., in Little Parliament, xvi. 230; attends Cromwell to Parliament, xvii. 23; Deputy Major-General, 155 n., one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Howard, the beatified Philanthropist, xix. 75.
- Howe, Lord, beats French navy, iv. 298; in the attack on Confians's fleet, xxviii. 343.
- Howel Davies, the Bucanier, xiii. 239.
- Howlet, Mr., tutor to Cromwell, xiv. 41, 43.
- Hoym, Graf von, xxii. 385.
- Hubbert, Capt., passed over, xvi. 118.
- Hubertsburg, sacking of, xxix. 159-163, 336; Congress for peace held at, 336-338.
- Hubner, cited, xxi. 76 n.; xxiii. 196 n.; xxix. 261 n.
- Hudson's Statue, xix. 307-350; what the Hudson worshippers ought to have done, while they were about it, 309; his Popular Election, 319; his value as a railway-maker, 320. See Statues.
- Hughes, Col., Governor of Chepstow, Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 214.
- Hugo, Abbot, old, feeble and improvident, xiii. 73; his death, 78, difficulties with Monk Samson, 90.
- Huguenin, Patriot, tocsin in heart, iii. 297; 20th June (1792), 322.
- Hulin, Half-pay, at siege of Bastille, ii. 241.
- Hull, Charles I. attempts, xiv. 124; besieged, 172, 175, 182; Governors of, 308.
- Hülsen, at Kolin, xxvii. 218, 226, 227, 229; with Prince Henri in Bohemia, xxviii. 152; with Dohna, against the Russians, 169; at Zullichau, 176; marches into Saxony, 301, 303; with Friedrich in Saxony, xxix. 11, 12; assists at siege of Dresden, 27; defeats the Reichsfolk on the Durrenberg, 78; hastens to the assistance of Berlin, 91; returns to Saxony, 102, with Friedrich, 105; dispatched to Leipzig, to clear out the Reichs Army, 107; battle of Torgau, 115, 117, 121; getting into bivouac, 126; hears renewed firing, and hastens to it, through the darkness of night, 127-131; his respect for Gellert, 152; sends reinforcements to Prince Henri, 326.
- Hume Castle besieged, xvi. 116.
- Hume's scepticism, vi. 93; vii. 278; viii. 390, Hume and Johnson contrasted, ix. 104; fifteen Atheists at one cast, 228.
- Humility, Christian, vii. 234; blessed are the humble, they that are not known, x. 320.
- Humour, sensibility the essence of, vi. 18; vii. 31; the finest perfection of poetic genius, viii. 127.
- Hungarian Diet, xxv. 78; enthusiasm for Maria Theresa, 399.
- Hungary, King of, Papist, xviii. 118; it becomes part of Austria, xxi. 240.
- Hunger, war waged by, xxi. 345.
- Hungerford, Anthony, Royalist, xvi. 210, 215, Cromwell's letters to, 211, 216.
- Hungerford, Henry, notice of, xvi. 209.
- Hungerford, Sir Edward, notice of, xvi. 209, 210.
- Hunolstein, cited; spurious, xxx. 258 n.
- Huns, Attila's, long arms of, iv. 7.
- Huntingdon described, xiv. 25.
- Huntly, Marquis, for Charles II., xvi. 87, 160.
- Hurry, Col. Sir John, wounded at Preston, xv. 26; taken with Montrose, and executed, 34 n.
- Hursley described, xiv. 319.
- Hurst Castle, Charles I. at, xv. 101.
- Huss, John, viii. 264; xxi. 191, 196; xxv. 189.
- Hussites, xxv. 432.
- Hutchinson, Colonel, a kind of hero, xii. 246; and Cromwell, 278; Governor of Nottingham, xv. 86.
- Hyde, Mr. See Clarendon, Lord.
- Hyde Park, Army near, xiv. 298; accident to Cromwell in, xvii. 82.
- Hyndford, Lord, at Breslau, xxv. 17,

- 20, 25; audience with King Friedrich, 20, 29; again, with Robinson, 42; at Gross Neundorf, 61, 69; two notes, 70; interview with Goltz, 73; meeting at Klein-Schnellendorf, 83; at Berlin, 97; Order of the Thistle, and Silver Dinner-Service, 197; mentioned also, xxiv. 285; xxv. 13, 165, 193; xxvi. 246.
- Hypocrisy, old-established, xi. 352; the old true paths submerged in, xx. 117; the one thing bad, 130, 162, silence far preferable, 214, duty of abhorrence, 217.
- Hypocrites, sincere, xxii. 18.
- ICELAND, the home of Norse Poets, xii. 20.
- Ich dien, xxi. 173.
- Idea, society the embodiment of an, viii. 343; great men, x. 229. See Man.
- Ideal, the, exists only in the Actual, i. 188, 190; good, v. 55; in the Real, xiii. 73, 237.
- Idealism, vii. 274.
- Ideals, realised, ii. 9; x. 379.
- Idleness, misery of, v. 56; doom of, x. 341; how it inevitably rots, xi. 180; black and white, 205; alone without hope, xiii. 183; idle Aristocracy, 216, 222, 252, 348; lying in wait round all labour-offices, xix. 117; organised, 177; in Rome, xx. 208.
- Idolatry, xii. 143; criminal only when insincere, 145.
- Idols, all, have to fall, xix. 324.
- Igdrasil, the Life-Tree, xii. 24, 119; xiii. 47, 161, 309.
- Ignavia, the general demon of, xi. 186.
- Ignon, St., General, at Torgau, xxix. 115.
- Ignorance, our period of, xiii. 299.
- Ignorant, right of the, to be guided by the Wise, x. 371.
- Ilgen, xxi. 441; xxii. 245; xxiv. 54.
- Ihad, Homer's, xi. 366; xiii. 163.
- Imagination. See Fantasy.
- Imhoff defends the bridge at Rees, xxviii. 123 n.
- Immortality, a glimpse of, i. 253.
- Impossibility, every genius an, till he appear, vii. 20; Mirabeau's notion of impossibilities, x. 149.
- Impossible, not a good word to have often in the mouth, x. 408; xii. 24, 28; without *soul*, all things impossible, 186; every noble work at first 'impossible,' 247, 255, 364. See New.
- Imposture, statistics of, i. 110, empire of, in flames, x. 92. See Bankruptcy.
- Impropriations, lay, meaning of, xiv. 39. See Feoffees.
- Improvisators, literary, vii. 250; x. 279.
- Inchgarvie taken, xvi. 158, 161.
- Inchiquin, Lord, assaults Carrick, xv. 222.
- Incontinence, the half of all our sins, xix. 255.
- Incumbrance, Parliamentary defining of, xvi. 206, 242; xviii. 63.
- Independence, foolish parade of, i. 226, 242; xiii. 353.
- Independents and Presbyterians, xiv. 202, 272, 281.
- India, England victorious in, xxviii. 312.
- Indies, West, expedition to, failed, xvii. 151, 158.
- Indifference, centre of, i. 164.
- Indigence, made human, xxiv. 11.
- Indignation, vii. 29.
- Individual responsibility, xix. 282.
- Industrialisms, English, x. 391.
- Industry, Captains of, xiii. 240, 258, 335, 355, 362; xix. 42, 51; our industrial ages, xiii. 309; or death, xix. 55; Industrial Regiments, 178, 198; English career of Industrialism, 224.
- Infâme, L', chief monster of chaos, xxix. 350; may again need to be tied up, 351.
- Infancy and Maturity, xiii. 159.
- Infant intuitions and acquirements, i. 87, genius and dulness, 93.
- Infidelity, ix. 73.
- Ingoldsby, Col., at Bristol siege, xiv. 238.
- Ingoldsby, Brigadier, at Fontenoy, xxvi. 61.
- Inheritance, infinite of every human soul, ix. 376.
- Insdal's, Count d', plot, iii. 150.
- Injustice, the one thing utterly intolerable, x. 356, 360, xiii. 262; no-

- thing unjust can continue in this world, x. 366, 379.
- Innes, Lient-Col., taken, xv. 34.
- Insanity, strange affinity of Wisdom and, xiii. 256.
- Inspiration, perennial, i. 186, 202, 245; still possible, vii. 298, 333, 388; ix. 12; of God the only real intelligence, xx. 45; the unforgivable sin to swerve from, 62, 71.
- Instrument of Government, the, xvi. 274; xvii. 3; new, 281; xviii. 34.
- Insurrection, most sacred of duties, ii. 312; of Women, 297-351; of August Tenth, iii. 354-360; difficult, 359; of Paris, against Girondins, 1793, iv. 196-202; sacred right of, 311, 313, 344, 345, 348, 361, 366, 392, 396, 397; last Sansculottic, 381-3, of Babœuf, 398; Manchester, xiii. 19. See *Riot*.
- Intellect, celebrated march of, viii. 348; what might be done, with intellect *enough*, xi. 38, 62; the summary of man's gifts, xii. 124, 200; tragic consequences of insufficient, xix. 117, 132, 136, 150, 155, 223; human, the exact summary of human *Worth*, 129; how to increase the supply, 136, 137; English *beaver* intellect, 224; and virtue, one great summary of gifts, xx. 236; the best symptom of, xxii. 72; uttered and *unuttered*, xxiii. 94; and vulpinism, 173; love of, 296.
- Intellectuals, twenty-four million, awakened into action, x. 412; female, xxi. 53.
- Invention, i. 38, 153; xiii. 161.
- Inventions, human, vii. 241, 328; German contributions to the general store, vii. 262; Irish ditto, ix. 13.
- Inverkeithing, battle of, xvi. 155, 156; Colours taken at, xviii. 251.
- Inverness Citadel built by Cromwell, xvi. 186.
- Invisible, the, Nature the visible Garment of, i. 53; bonds, binding all Men together, 58; the Visible and Invisible, 65, 211; World, the, within and about us, vii. 279.
- Ipres, xxv. 383.
- Ireland, tragic mismanagement of, x. 346; Irish national character de-graded, 347; England invaded by Irish destitution, 348; a black, xi. 177; misrepresentation of Cromwell's doings in, xv. 238, 254; narrative of Cromwell's campaign in, 267, state of, in 1649, 164, 165.
- Ireton, Commissary-General, at Bristol siege, xiv. 234; weds Bridget Cromwell, 254; character of, 269, 290; in Ireland, xv. 154; President of Munster, 284, Deputy in Ireland, 296; dies in Ireland, 296; Cromwell's letter to, xvi. 61; character of, 204.
- Ireton, Mrs., Cromwell's letter to, xiv. 269; widow, married to Fleetwood, xvi. 205; notice of, 267; xvii. 144.
- Ireton, Alderman, in Little Parliament, xvi. 230; of Customs Committee, 268.
- Irish, the, Poor-Slave, i. 270; Sans-Potato, iv. 387; Widow *proving* her sisterhood, xiii. 186, 262; Massacre in 1641, xiv. 121; Charles I. sends for Army of, 190; Papists found in arms in England to be hanged, 196; Cromwell's declaration to the, xv. 239; forces go abroad, 295; Puritan settlement, 297; and British Pauperism, xix. 43; the Irish Giant seeking whom he may devour, 115, 189. See *Papists*.
- Ironsides, Cromwell's, described, xiv. 169; first glimpse of, 172; Cromwell to Hampden on the, xviii. 14, 15.
- Irving, Death of Edward, ix. 393.
- Islam, xii. 67.
- Isnard, Max, notice of, iii. 56; in First Parliament, 255; on Ministers, 298; to demolish Paris, iv. 195; will demolish, 199, recalled, 361.
- Isolation, i. 107; the sum-total of wretchedness, xiii. 338.
- Israelitish History, significance of, vi. 279; ix. 308. See *Bible*.
- Italian Liberty, xxi. 152; Italy extinguishing its Protestantism, 273; Italian War, xxv. 231.
- Iturbide, 'the Napoleon of Mexico,' xi. 69.
- Itzig of Berlin, xxix. 96.
- Iwan, xxii. 10; xxiii. 93; childhood of, xxiv. 156, 256; death, 263.

Iwanowna. See Anne of Courland.

JACOB, Jean Claude, eldest of men, iii. 66.

Jacobea of Baden, xxi. 313.

Jacobinism, spirit of, iv. 292.

Jacobins, Society, germ of, ii. 130; Hall, described, and members, iii. 39; Journal &c. of, 40; daughters of, 41, 137; at Nanci, suppressed, 122; Club increases, 136; and Mirabeau, 140, 168; prospers, 299; 'Lords of the Articles,' 301; extinguishes Feuillans, 301; Hall enlarged, described, 301; and Marseillaise, 349; and Laverne, iv. 18; message to Dumouriez, 81; missionaries in Army, 107, 174; on King's trial, 108; on accusation of Robespierre, 110; against Girondins, 112, 113, 190, National Convention and, 224, 288; Popular Tribunals of, 268; Couthon's Question in, 309; purges members, 312; to become dominant, 341; locked out by Legendre, 350; begs back its keys, 360; decline of, 374; mobbed, suspended, 374; hunted down, 378.

Jacobins, the two, vi. 58; viii. 61.

Jaffray, Provost, at Dunbar battle, xvi. 44; at Edinburgh, 108, 109, 122; account of, 121; a Quaker &c., 122; in Little Parliament, 230.

Jägerndorf, Duchy of, xxi. 241, 268, 293, 307, 347, 366; xxiii. 152; country, xxiv. 175, 299.

Jahnus, Colonel, death of, xxv. 424.

Jalès, Camp of, iii. 16; Royalists at, 291; destroyed, 292.

Jamaica Committee, the, xi. 351; Island of, taken, xvii. 158.

James, Col. John, Governor of Worcester, after the Battle, xvi. 181 n.

James I., xi. 219, 222, visits Hinchinbrook, xiv. 36; a theologian, 39; his falling-off, 41; returns to Scotland, 44; his miscalculations, 50; dies, 51; his bad reign, xix. 341; xxi. 328, 337, 339.

James Sobieski of Poland, xxii. 41.

Jandun, Duhan de. See Duhan.

Jaromierz (Jaromirz), xxiii. 153; xxvi. 120; Friedrich Wilhelm at, xxiii.

386; D'Arget saves Valori from the Pandours at, xxvi. 120.

Jarriges, M., a Prussian judge, xxvi. 291, 304, 331.

Jaucourt, Chev., and Liberty, iii. 257.

Jauernik, xxv. 168.

Jay, Dame le, bookseller, iii. 35.

Jean Paul, xxi. 110.

Jeanne d'Arc, character of, v. 182.

Jedburgh. See Geddard.

Jeetz, General, at Breslau, xxiv. 219; cannot take Namslau, 223, 226; succeeds at last, 228; siege of Brieg, 228, 370.

Jefferson, Brick, answer to, xix. 323.

Jeffrey, bookseller, xxvi. 247 n.

Jemappes, battle of, iv. 106.

Jena University, xxvi. 259, 260.

Jenkins, Captain Robert, scandalous treatment of, by the Spaniards, xxiii. 38; his 'Ear' reemerges, and produces effects, 374, 403; xxiv. 120, 124, 338, 343, 390; xxvi. 227, 229, 430; Jenkins - Ear Controversy at last settled, xxix. 341.

Jenner, Robert, M.P., notice of, xv. 86; Cromwell's letter to, 87.

Jenning, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, xxx. 126.

Jenny Geddes's stool, flight of, xi. 28, 42.

Jephson, Governor of Bandon, xv. 223.

Jerome's, St., method of Scripture commentary, xxi. 49.

Jericho, one's, apt to fall, xxv. 192.

Jesuit practices in England, xvii. 36.

Jesuit stabs Henry IV., xiv. 46. See Papist.

Jesuitism and Dame Dubarry, ii. 18; sick unto death, ix. 268; xi. 94; character and influence of, xix. 353-403; age and gospel of, 353; its stupendous achievements, 367; how the computation quite broke down, 368; 'vivaciousness' of, 369; the Jesuit *soul* nestled amongst us, 372; necessity of putting it away, 376; in the Fine Arts, 383, 392; celebrated 'virtues,' 394.

Jesuits, their skill and zeal, ix. 241; Georgel, x. 22; priests, xxi. 312, 321, 328, 335, 338; xxii. 44, 141; xxiii. 314; busy in Glatz, xxix. 35; fanaticism in Poland, 419.

- Jesus of Nazareth our divinest Symbol, i. 217, 221; the most indubitable of facts, xix. 397. See Crucify.
- Jew debts and creditors, xiii. 74, 113, 115; Benedict and the tooth-forceps, 225.
- Jews endeavour to settle in England, xvii. 175, 176.
- J. F. S., Author of a *Life of Brown*, cited, xxiv. 189 n.; xxvii. 245 n.
- Joachim Ernst, Markgraf, xxi. 336.
- Joachim Friedrich, Eighth Kurfürst, xxi. 287, 298; fairly gets hold of Preussen, 307; death, 309.
- Joachim I., Kur-Brandenburg, xxi. 229, 230, 246; his character, 275; his Protestant Wife, 276; death-bed, 279.
- Joachim II., Sixth Kurfürst, xxi. 281; abhorrence of chicanery, 285; accident to his poor Wife in the Schloss of Grumnitz, 287; gets co-infettment in Preussen, 288; Heritage-Brotherhood with the Duke of Liegnitz, 289; stiff debates with King Ferdinand, 291; stanch to the great cause of Protestantism, 294; on good terms with Karl V., 296.
- Joachimsthal, xxvii. 82.
- Joachimsthal Gymnasium, xxi. 287, 299.
- Job, the Book of, xii. 59.
- Jobst of Mähren, xxi. 169, 181, 185, 186, 190.
- Jocelin of Brakelond, xiii. 51; his Boswellian Notebook seven Centuries old, 52.
- Jockey. See Jokei.
- Johann II., Burggraf of Nürnberg, xxi. 160, 178.
- Johann Friedrich the Magnanimous taken captive by Karl V.; xxi. 282, 286, 296; xxii. 378; xxvii. 290; his Wife, xxi. 303.
- Johann George, Elector of Saxony, xxi. 344.
- Johann George of Jägerndorf, xxi. 307, 346; xxiv. 175.
- Johann George, Seventh Kurfürst, xxi. 232, 301, 304; Gera Bond, 233; with Karl V. at the siege of Wittenberg, 296; a prudent, thrifty, just-minded Herr, 298.
- Johann, King of Bohemia, xxi. 166, 168; death on the field of Crecy, 172; xxiv. 174.
- Johann of Cüstrin, xxi. 294.
- Johann of Nepomuk, xxi. 182; xxiii. 160.
- Johann Sigismund, Ninth Kurfürst, xxi. 307, 309; interest in the Cleve Heritage, 310; his claims disputed, 313; slaps young Pfalz-Neuburg's face, 325; gets possession of Prussia, 332.
- Johann the Alchemist, xxi. 220.
- Johanna Elizabeth, Wife of Duke of Württemberg, xxii. 430; steadily refuses an iniquitous divorce, 431.
- Johannes Cicero, Fourth Kurfürst, xxi. 227.
- Johannes of Valencia, xxi. 249.
- Johannes Parricida, xxi. 150.
- John of Leyden, of Bromwicham, xi. 342, 352.
- John Frederick the Magnanimous, xi. 272, 277, 279, 285.
- John, King, xiii. 57, 131.
- John Casimir, King of Poland, xxi. 357; gives up the Homage of Preussen, 357; abdicates, 359; foretells fate of Poland, xxiii. 178; xxix. 414; his valedictory speech, 415.
- John, St., Hospitallers of, xxi. 116; xxiii. 47.
- John the Steadfast, Kur-Sachsen, xi. 272; xxi. 247.
- Johnson, Colonel, shot, xv. 283.
- Johnson, Samuel, his hypochondria, xiv. 51; xxi. 7, 54, 212, 419; xxii. 26, 304; his preventive against bad biographies, vi. 3; his sound practical sense, 251; a small occurrence, ix. 16; Boswell's *Life of*, 25-106; his existence a reality which he transacted *awake*, 56; poverty and sore obstruction, 57; boyish turn for royalty, 59; college mortifications and stubborn pride, 60; his bravehearted Wife, 63; a literary career, 66; letter to Lord Chesterfield, 70; his distracted era, and manful honesty, 72; his Parliamentary Debates, 81; tears of sacred triumph, 83; a little circle around the Wise man, 86; the conservation of what was

- genuine in Toryism, 90; a brave man, 92; a clear hater of Cant, 96; merciful, affectionate nature, 97; marketplace at Uttoxeter, 99; politeness, 101; *xix.* 238; prejudices, *ix.* 102; Johnson and Hume, 104; a visit to his house in Gough Square, 82; his difficulties, poverty, hypochondria, *xii.* 210; rude self-help, stands genuinely by the old formulas, 211; his noble unconscious sincerity, 213; twofold Gospel, of Prudence and hatred of Cant, 214; his Dictionary, 215; the brave old Samuel, 266: mentioned, *x.* 383; *xi.* 359; cited, *xxii.* 262 n.
- Johnston, Archibald, Lord Registrar of Scotland, account of, *xiv.* 211; *xvi.* 145, 146; Cromwell's letter to, 144.
- Jokei, French, described, *ii.* 60.
- Jomini, cited, *xxvii.* 214 n.
- Jones, Paul, equipped for America, *ii.* 54; at Paris, account of, *iii.* 29, 62; burial of, 340.
- Jones, Col. Michael, occupies Dublin, *xiv.* 303; routs Irish at Dungan Hill, 303; Cromwell's letter to, 303; routs Ormond's Army, *xv.* 154; vote in favour of, 156, 210; dies, 227.
- Jones, Col. John, regicide, *xiv.* 304.
- Jones, Col. Philip, in Council of State, *xvii.* 8 n.; on Committee of Kingship, *xviii.* 23.
- Jones, Inigo, taken at Basing, *xiv.* 250.
- Jones, Quartermaster Samuel, notice of, *xv.* 9.
- Jonson's, Ben, war-tuck, *xi.* 223.
- Jordan, Charles Etienne, *xxiii.* 291, 293, 399; gossipy Letters to Friedrich, *xxiv.* 204, 386; *xxv.* 156: mentioned also, *xxiv.* 11, 18, 27, 135, 209, 305; *xxv.* 49, 146, 335.
- Jordan, *xxvi.* 180.
- Jordens, cited, *xxix.* 153 n.
- Jore, bookseller, *xxvi.* 313.
- Joseph I., Kaiser, *xxiv.* 176, 192.
- Joseph II., Kaiser, birth, *xxiv.* 140; a thriving child, *xxv.* 78; shown to the Hungarian Diet, 80; King of the Romans, *xxvi.* 419, 421; *xxix.* 397; becomes Kaiser, 397, does honour to Schwerin's memory, *xxvii.* 181; pays Friedrich a friendly visit at Neisse, *xxx.* 4-9, receives return-visit at Neustadt; Prince de Ligne's account of, 16-26; informed that Friedrich is dying, and marches on Brandenburg, 118; visits Paris, and converses with D'Alembert, 132, 133, thinks France a beautifully-united country, 134; tries to get Bavaria, 136, 137; bullies Karl Theodor, 154; writes to King Friedrich, 157; at the head of his troops, 161; ingratiates himself with the Czarina, and hopes to have a clear stage for his ambition, 207, 208; a grandly-attempting man, who could succeed in nothing, 249, 250: mentioned also, 63, 111, 240.
- Jotuns, *xii.* 21, 41.
- Jounneau, Deputy, in danger in September, *iv.* 52.
- Jourdan, General, repels Austria, *iv.* 295.
- Jourdan, Coupe-tê'e, at Versailles, *ii.* 329, 349; leader of Avignon Brigands, *iii.* 264; costume of, 264; supreme in Avignon, 267; massacre by, 269; flight of (cites of the South), 269, guillotined, *iv.* 268.
- Journiac. See St. Méard.
- Journals (see Paris); placard, *iii.* 36, 133.
- Joyce, Cornet, carries off the King, *xiv.* 288; Lieut.-Col., imprisoned, *xvi.* 13.
- Julich, *xxi.* 303, 310, 355; siege of, 321; a carpenter of, kidnapped, *xxii.* 141. See Cleve.
- Julich and Berg. See Berg-Julich.
- Julien, Sieur Jean, guillotined, *iv.* 31.
- Julers, siege of, *xi.* 224.
- June Twentieth (1792), *iii.* 323.
- Jumus, *xxix.* 249 n.
- Justice, bed of, *ii.* 102; the basis of all things, *xiii.* 12, 24, 138, 205; what it is, 17, 266; a just judge, 119; venerable wigged-justice began in wild-justice, 164; strong, 238, 358; God's Justice alone the one indispensable thing, *xix.* 82, 87; unspeakably difficult of attainment, 328; voice of, to a repentant sinner, 364; pig-justice, 380; love of, *xxi.* 415; *xxii.* 164; *xxiii.* 31; persistence in, *xxi.* 416; *xxii.* 50; *xxiii.* 94. See Parchments.

- Kabale und Liebe*, Schiller's, a domestic tragedy of high merit, v. 42.
- Kadijah, the good, Mahomet's first Wife, xii. 64, 68.
- Kahlbutz, Col., at Tetschen, xxv. 402.
- Kainardschi, Peace of, xxx. 44 n.
- Kaisers, the early, xxi. 72, 89, three futile Kaisers, 132; a new Kaiser, 135; a contested election, 147; seven Non-Hapsburg Kaisers, 197.
- Kaiserwahl, xxiv. 362.
- Kalkreuth, Adjutant, xxviii. 296; in battle of Freyberg, xxix. 325, 326.
- Kalkstein, Baron von, kidnapped at Warsaw, xxi. 369; xxii. 17.
- Kalkstein, Lieutenant-Colonel, xxi. 453, xxii. 17.
- Kalkstein, General, xxiv. 295, 298, 301, 371.
- Kaltenborn's, Major, account of King Friedrich's Reviews, xxx. 114, 115.
- Kamecke, Frau von, xxi. 393; letter from the King to, xxii. 461; defends Wilhelmina from her Father's violence, 468, 469.
- Kamenz, Abbey of, xxiv. 273.
- Kamken. See Kamecke.
- Kannegiesser, xxii. 270, 271, 286, 298.
- Kant, xxx. 199; his Philosophy, v. 130; Goethe's opinion of, 271; vi. 86; vii. 274; Schiller's opinion of, viii. 139, two things that strike one dumb, xi. 370, 371.
- Kanzler von Ludwig, xxiii. 68; xxiv. 205; Silesian Manifesto, 380.
- Kapp, cited, xxi. 267 n.
- Kappel saves Friedrich from betrayal to the Austrians, xxix. 225-233.
- Karl Albert, Kur-Baiern, xxiv. 143, 249, 349; protests against Pragmatic Sanction, 352; treaty with Belleisle for Kaisership, 364; elected, 368, 374; xxv. 131; Unertl's urgent appeal, xxiv. 374; public declaration, xxv. 40; enters Linz, 76; dreams of sovereignty, 82, 108, 117; across to Mannheim, 119; at the topgallant of his hopes, 132; his strangely-chequered career, 132, 135; Kaiser Karl VII., 136; coronation and illness, 137; series of disasters, 153; terror on Friedrich's making peace for himself, 215; D'Harcourt's futile reinforcements, 224; "Kaiser and Nothing," 241; returns to München, 247, 267; takes Broglie in hand, and flings down his Patent, 268; hurries back to Frankfurt, 273, Conferences at Hanau, 300; become theatrical to think of, 308; "Kaiser, as you call him," 310; gets back to München, 420, xxvi. 16; death, 23, 24: mentioned also, xxix. 405.
- Karl Alexander, Duke of Wurtemberg, xxv. 143.
- Karl August Christian of Zweibrück, Heir of Bavaria, xxx. 142, 145; glad to resist Austrian encroachments, 148, 245, 246.
- Karl, Duke of Brunswick, xxiii. 92, 269, 366.
- Karl, Duke of Courland, xxix. 403.
- Karl Edzard of Ost-Friesland, xxv. 375.
- Karl Eugen, Prince, of Wurtemberg, boyish gallantries, xxv. 143; Schiller's Duke, 146; parting letter from Friedrich, 365. See Wurtemberg.
- Karl, Grand-Master of the Knights of St. John, xxiii. 47.
- Karl Gustaf of Sweden, xxi. 189; war with Poland, 356; dream of a new Goth Empire; death, 358.
- Karl Gustav III. becomes King of Sweden, xxx. 75; tries to muzzle his monster of a Senate, and gets killed, 84.
- Karl IV., Kaiser, xxi. 165, 169, 171, 197; xxiv. 174, 346; buys Brandenburg, 174, 175.
- Karl V., Kaiser, xxi. 240, 245, 259, 263, 268, 291, 304; xxii. 414; at the siege of Metz, xxi. 265; xxv. 285, his Sister married to Christian II. of Denmark, xxi. 276; triumph at Mühlberg, 282; xxii. 378, his haughty ways, xxi. 284; reverses and abdication, 286; at siege of Wittenberg, 296.
- Karl VI., Kaiser, xxi. 29, 380; xxii. 99, 111; xxiii. 154; his feebly-virulent quarrel with the Queen of Spain, xxii. 53; a fearful affair, though a ludicrous one, 54, 103, 113, 129, 250; converts and marries a Protestant Princess, 102; xxiii. 88; his Pragmatic Sanction in favour of Maria Theresa, xxii. 107, 252, 448

xxiii. 102; his Ostend East-India Company, **xxii.** 111; Congress of Cambrai, 116; Treaty of Vienna, 121; **xxiii.** 34; sends Seckendorf to Berlin to snare Friedrich Wilhelm, **xxii.** 150, 253; bribes Grumkow, 152; high-snuffing contempt for Friedrich Wilhelm, 154; a treacherous bargain, 156, 269; Congress of Soissons, 250; suspends the Duke of Mecklenburg, 273; a visit from Friedrich Wilhelm, **xxiii.** 149; dreadful doubts about the ceremonial, 149, 153; unceremonial meetings, 160; what Friedrich thought of his Father's visit, 163; attempt to resuscitate the Double-Marriage, 168, 184; interferes in the Polish Election, 198; attacked by the French, 207; applies to the Reich for help, 215; high demands on Friedrich Wilhelm, 263; second Rhine Campaign, 263; the damages he had to pay, 270; fallen out with Friedrich Wilhelm, 274; declares war against the Turks, 350; disastrous results, 370; shameful Peace, 401; a Kaiser much beggared and disgraced, 402; his orthodoxy, **xxiv.** 192; tries to settle the Herstal Affair, 115; will not declare for England against France, 123; news of his death reaches Berlin, 135; particulars of his last illness, 137; angry controversy with Karl Albert, **xxv.** 135.

Karl VII., Kaiser, xxi. 161, 198. See **Karl Albert.**

Karl, Margraf, at scalade of Glogau, xxiv. 290; wounded at Mollwitz, 320; **xxv.** 405; in Silesia, **xxvi.** 49, 72; a brilliant passage of arms, 74; refuses Broglio admission to the Saxon Camp, **xxvii.** 76; to guard Silesia, **xxviii.** 52; at Grussau, 84; marching towards Dann, 86; meets the King at Grossenhayn, 87; in battle of Hochkirch, 102, 105.

Karl Peter Ulrich, afterwards Czar Peter III., xxv. 351.

Karl Philip, Kur-Pfalz, xxii. 40; **xxiii.** 352; **xxx.** 141; runs off with James Sobieski's Bride, **xxii.** 41; becomes Pfalz-Neuberg, 42; tribulations of

Heidelberg Protestants, 44; Friedrich Wilhelm's visit, 436, 446; his Mistress, **xxiii.** 54.

Karl, Prince, xxv. 114; takes command of the Austrian Army, 118, 157, 152; advances towards Chrudin, 171; at Chotusitz, 179, 185; chases Broglio, 228; besieges Prag, 230, 237; off to meet Maillebois, 243; at Braunau, 260, 268; Deggendorf, 271; visits George II. at Hanau, 306; projected invasion of Alsace, 313; marriage, 316; Rhine Campaign, 384; the acme of his life, 388, 392; distracted books about him, 387 n.; hastens to relief of Prag, 407; recrosses the Rhine, 415; follows Friedrich into Bohemia, 422; having pushed his enemy over the Elbe, wishes to close the campaign, 431; his Wife's sad death, **xxvi.** 9; marches against Friedrich in Silesia, 50, 72, 77; very capable of certainty, and also of doubt, the wrong way, 77; Hohenfriedberg, 87, 93, 96; will have to go, 96; beats retreat, 97; skill in choosing camps and positions, 101; at Konigsgratz, 102; urged to try another battle, 118; advances towards Friedrich, 127; battle of Sohr, 129-134; tumultuous retreat, 132; falls back to Konigsgratz, 136; on march to Brandenburg, 141, 142; quite unaware that Friedrich has got ready for him, 146, 149; after Hennersdorf, tumbles home double-quick, 153; hastens to join Rutowski, 155; arrives at Dresden, but does nothing, 166; vanishes into Bohemia, 169; takes command in defence of Prag, **xxvii.** 147, 151, 152, 161; attack of spasm, 170; frantic efforts to prevent defeat, 174; will not surrender, 208; not very broad awake, 238; follows the Prince of Prussia, 254; burns Zittau to ashes, 258; sends Nadasti to attack Winterfeld, 272; follows Bevern into Silesia, 365; battle of Breslau, 367; Breslau capitulates, 370; Council of War, will go out to meet Friedrich, and finish him, 378; puffed-up with high thoughts, 380; battle of Leu-

- then, Prince Karl and Austria fallen from their high hopes in one day, 382-397, 404, relieved from his military employments, 405; withdraws to his government of the Netherlands, 405; his death, xxx. 221, 222.
- Karl, Theodor, bargains with Austria to give up his succession to Bavaria, xxx. 136; a poor, idle, egotistic creature, 140; legally installed, 143; signs the Austrian bargain, 144; remains dead to the matter, 145, 147, 208, 244.
- Karl XII. of Sweden, xxviii. 299, 300; how he first took arms, xxix. 260. See Charles XII.
- Karl XIII., xxx. 84 n.
- Karoly, General, xxvi. 48.
- Karsch, Frau, the Berlin literary prodigy, xxx. 178, 179 n.
- Kasebier, a celebrated Prussian thief, xxvii. 209.
- Katholische Kirche, xxvi. 344.
- Katsbach, the, xxiii. 151.
- Katsch, xxii. 209.
- Katte, Lieutenant, xxii. 222, 305; a dangerous companion for Friedrich, 310, 386, 404; Wilhelmina's Miniature, 404; Friedrich's projected flight, 406, 421, 426; news of his Arrest, 459; sends Writing-desk and money to the Queen, 460; arrested, 461; the King's ungovernable rage, 467, 470; Katte and the Crown-Prince to be tried by Court-Martial, 481; Katte's iron doom, 417; piously prepares himself to die, 488; last words with the Prince, and death, 490.
- Katte, Lieutenant-General von, xxiii. 239, 273; xxiv. 24, 46, 295.
- Katte, Minister, xxviii. 188.
- Katte, Rittmeister von, xxii. 417, 421, 422.
- Katzenellenbogen, xxii. 450.
- Katzler, Colonel, xxvi. 127; at Hengersdorf, 151.
- Kaufbeuren, xxiii. 133.
- Kaufungen, Kunz von, xi. 258, 292; exasperations with Elector Frederick, 259; steals his two Sons, 262; beheaded, 266.
- Kaunitz, Prince, denounces Jacobins, iii. 301.
- Kaunitz-Rietberg, Count von, xxvi. 226; greatest of diplomatists, 230, 281; xxvii. 18, 20; Smelfungus's estimate of him, xxvi. 421, 422; arranges Klinggräb's audience with the Empress, xxvii. 51; dispatched to Prince Karl at Zittau, 271; snubs Lord Bute, xxix. 304; at interview of the Kaiser with Friedrich, xxx. 14, 26; discusses with Friedrich the Russian-Turk war, 32-36; hard-mouthed negotiations on the Polish Question, 43-46; indignant letter from Maria Theresa, 48; intrigues and bargains to get Bavaria, 136, 138-140, 153; tries to mollify Friedrich, 155, 156; his fine schemes all spoiled, 246: mentioned also, xxviii. 6, 131, 368; xxx. 4, 37, 63, 207.
- Kausler, cited, xxi. 363 n.; xxiv. 317 n.; xxvii. 214 n.; xxix. 133 n.
- Kayserling, Russian Ambassador at Warsaw, xxix. 404.
- Keats's weak-eyed sensibility, vii. 25.
- Kehl, xxiii. 207.
- Keinton fight. See Battle, Edgehill.
- Keith, Excellency Robert, at Vienna, xxvi. 418; xxvii. 22; at Petersburg, entertains Czar Peter, xxix. 275.
- Keith, Excellency Sir Robert Murray (son of the foregoing), cited, xxviii. 113 n.; Minister at Dresden, &c., xxx. 106; rescues Queen Matilda from a Danish prison, 109; visits Lord Marischal, 110, 111.
- Keith, Feldmarschall, in the Russian service, at the siege of Oczakow, xxiii. 349, at Stockholm, xxiv. 266; takes service with Friedrich, xxvi. 221; much esteemed by him, 345; on march into Saxony, xxvii. 59; interviews with her Polish Majesty, 61; marches to Aussig, to meet the Austrians, 73, 79; joined by Friedrich, 81; before Prag, 155, 174, 186, 206, 207; skilful retreat, 236; with the King at Bornstadt, 267; march to Erfurt, 280; Rossbach, 326, 327, 331; to march into Bohemia, 366; with Friedrich at the siege of Olmütz, xxviii. 29, 30, 24, 44, retreat

- to Königsgrätz, 45; prompt enough with his stroke, when wanted, 45; Breslau, 52; experience of Russian soldiering, 60; joins Ziethen in Saxony, 84; expostulates with Friedrich at Hochkirch, 92, has command of right wing, 94; death, 104; honourable soldier's-burial; 'a noble legacy,' monuments to his memory, 112, 113; his ancestry, 377.
- Keith, Lieutenant, xxii. 222, 386; stationed at Wesel, 310, 386; a party to Friedrich's projected flight, 423; news of its discovery by the King, 454; escapes, 457, 463; safe in England, 464; sentence, 486; returns to Prussia, xxiv. 25; receives a present from Friedrich, xxvi. 266; in the König-Maupertuis controversy, 384, 385.
- Keith, Page (brother of the above), xxii. 425, 426; will get horses for Friedrich, 442; attempted flight at Steinfurth, 445; confesses all to the King, 447; packed into the Fusilier Regiment, 465: mentioned, xxiv. 26.
- Kellermann at Valmy, iv. 71.
- Kelly, O', with Daun at Burkersdorf, xxix. 299, 300.
- Kelsey, Major, at Langford House, xiv. 252; becomes Colonel, a Major-General, xvii. 155 n.
- Kemble, Fanny, Sterling's admiration for, xx. 57.
- Kemeter, xxiii. 281.
- Kempis, Thomas à, viii. 255.
- Kendal, Duchess of, xxi. 170; xxii. 85, 205, 356, 485.
- Kerrick, Col., Cromwell's letter to, xiv. 331.
- Kent in insurrection, xiv. 325; xv. 310.
- Kepler, xix. 77; xxi. 329; xxv. 76; his true love of wisdom, vii. 189.
- Keppel, in the attack on Confians's fleet, xxviii. 343.
- Ker, Col. Gilbert, interview with, xvi. 29; at Glasgów, 83; in Scots Army, 87; Remonstrance by, 91-5, 97, 101, 102; his forces routed, 98.
- Ker, Earl Somerset. See Overbury.
- Ker, Sir Andrew, notice of, xv. 62.
- Ker of Kersland, xxi. 84 n.
- Kestlitz, Baron von, deputation from Grünberg, xxiv. 180.
- Kettenheil, Herr, xxvi. 253, 254.
- Kettlers, the, xxiii. 73.
- Keyserling, xxiii. 187, 292, 330, 400; xxiv. 27, 93, 305; xxvi. 180.
- Khan, Thamas Kouli, xxvi. 265.
- Khevenhüller, General, fortifies Vienna, xxv. 77, 83; collects an Army, 112; sweeps Ségur back, 119; takes Linz, 129; master of nearly all Bavaria, 224; visits King George at Hanau, 306: mentioned also, xxvii. 80.
- Kielmannsegge, Graf von, xxiii. 364.
- Kilkenny taken, xv. 270-281, 286, 287; Irish at, 270; Cats, xiii. 319.
- Killing no murder, xvii. 274 n.
- Kimber, Rev., on Cromwell, xiv. 20.
- Kimbolton, Lord, with the Five Members, xiv. 123. See Mandevil, Manchester.
- King, our true, chosen for us in Heaven, i. 240; primitive, ii. 10; divine right of, 10, Nature's, and their poor dog-hutch kingdoms, ix. 59; a true man *must* tend to be King of his own world, x. 118; and slaves, xi. 344; a summary of all the various figures of heroism, xii. 233, indispensable in all movements of men, 270; the true and the sham, xiii. 103, 110, 273; the ablest man the virtual King, 276; again *be* a King, 310, the proper name of all Kings, Minister, Servant, 320; everywhere, in sudden horror, *conscious* of being playactors, xix. 8; the true king and commander of men, 39, 41, 66; not to be dispensed with anywhere, 135, 259; true function of a King, 168, 289, 295; no King in Parliament, 267, 270, 279; Parliament an 'impossible King,' 281; without the trappings, xxi. 3; sham kingship, 9; the true King, 412, 416; worth of, 422; an economist King, 425; a constitutional King, xxi. 86, 204; a working King, 138, xxii. 378; an absolute King, 309; a kingly fight lost to the world, xxii. 283; modern Kings, xxiii. 421; cannot steer by count of votes, xxiv. 5; cannot be amiable all round, 132, a George II. for King, xxv. 37, un-

- fortunate and guilty, 420; a born King with his kingdom to seek, xxvii. 199, Kings true and false, xxix. 355, 356. See Able Man, Wisest Man, Premier, Sovereignities, Original Man.
- Kingdom, a man's, i. 118
- Kingship, decline of, in France, ii. 12; and politeness, xi. 359, Oliver Cromwell's, xvii. 280, 284, 291, 299, 311; xviii. 23, 24, 75, Committee on, xvii. 287, 297, he refuses it, xviii. 79. See Royalty.
- Kingston, insurrection at, xv. 14.
- Kingston, Duchess of, xxx. 13, 123.
- King-street, Cromwell lives in, xiv. 334.
- Kintore, Earldom of, xxviii. 377.
- Kirkcudbright, Lord, invites Cromwell to Edinburgh, xv. 78.
- Kirkman, James, the Irish Giant, xxii. 134, 137; xxiii. 423.
- Kladrup, xxiii. 155; xxv. 432.
- Klaproth, Medicinal-Assessor, xxvi. 263.
- Klausius, Amstrath, xxx. 293.
- Kleefeld, General, attacks Torgau, xxviii. 251, 268.
- Klein, cited, xxvi. 291 n.
- Klein-Schnellendorf, secret treaty at, xxv. 86.
- Kleist, General, xxiv. 223, 225; summoned from Pommern, xxviii. 235.
- Kleist, Colonel, of the Green Hussars, xxviii. 155, 232; at Aussig, 318; with Hülßen on the Durrenberg, xxix. 78; pounces on the Duke of Wurttemberg, 106; with Friedrich at Torgau, 114, 115, 117; with Prince Henri, 199, 256; tries to relieve Colberg, 235; at Freyberg, 325; attacks the Bohemian magazines, 327, seizes Nürnberg, 327; paid off at close of the war, 335.
- Kleist's, Major, tragic fate at Kunersdorf, xxviii. 232; death and soldier's funeral at Frankfurt, 233.
- Kleist, von, Engineer-Lieutenant, xxix. 315; at Portzen, xxx. 286.
- Klingemann, Dr. August, the most indisputable of playwrights, vii. 132; his *Ahasuer*, 134; *Faust*, and his melo-dramatic contract with the Devil, 136.
- Klinggräf, xxiii. 69; at Conferences of Hanau, xxv. 302, xxvii. 48; audience with the Empress of Austria, 51; farther question from Friedrich, 52, 53.
- Klootz, Anacharsis, xxx. 211.
- Klopstock, vi. 56; viii. 61; his Allegory of *The Two Muses*, 316; naturalised, iv. 10.
- Kloss, cited, xxi. 87 n.
- Kloster-Kampen, Fight of, xxix. 137-141
- Kloster-Zeven, Convention of, xxvii. 283, 284; renounced by England and Hanover, 324.
- Knave, given a world of, what must come of it, viii. 374.
- Knesebeck, cited, xxviii. 23 n.; xxix. 46 n.; xxx. 285.
- Knight, Charles, xxx. 106 n.
- Knobelsdorf, xxiii. 280, 291, 399; xxvi. 194.
- Knobloch, General, at Erfurt, xxviii. 146; attacking the Austrian magazines, 153; drives the Croats out of Bamberg, 154; tries to relieve Colberg, xxix. 235.
- Knock, Fort of, xxv. 383.
- Know thyself, and what thou canst work at, i. 159; ix. 313; xiii. 244.
- Knox, John, and the Virgin, iii. 122; one of the truest of the true, x. 236; Wilkie's picture of, a worthless failure, xi. 247; author of the Puritan revolution, 307; his influence on Scotland, 308, xii. 170; beautiful Scotch humour in him, 332; the bravest of Scotchmen, xii. 172; his unassuming career; is sent to the French Galleys, 173; his colloquies with Queen Mary, 175; vein of drolery; a brother to high and to low; his death, 177.
- Knut, xxi. 77.
- Knyphausen, Baron von, xxii. 243, 294, 329, 357, 364, 475, xxvii. 19, 33; xxviii. 14.
- Knyphausen, Madame, xxvi. 266.
- Knyvett, Thomas, taken at Lowestoff, xiv. 139; Cromwell's letter to him, 260.
- Koch, xxiii. 69: cited, xxvii. 137 n
- Kohler, xxi. 73 n., 151: cited, 72 n.,

- 73 n., 90 n., 126 n., 217 n.; xxiv. 277 n.; xxix. 62.
- Koln Battle, xxiii. 157; xxvii. 211-230.
- Kolitz, xxiii. 351.
- Kollas, Captain, at siege of Dresden, xxviii. 261, 263, 264, 276.
- Koln, Clement August, Kurfürst of, xxii. 454; xxiii. 62; famed old City of, xxii. 456.
- Koln, Elector of, and his troops, xxv. 429.
- König, dispute between Madame du Châtelet and, xxiv. 80; visits Maupertuis about his 'Law of Thrift,' is not handsomely received, xxvi. 282-287; publishes his strictures, 378, 379; correspondence with Maupertuis, 280; summoned by the Berlin Academy, 382, 383; resigns his membership, 386; appeals to the public, 386: cited, 379 n.
- Königsberg, xxi. 63, 120, 252, 364; University of, 261; Bürgermeister of, seized in open Hall, 369; Stanislaus at, xxiii. 268; homaging at, xxiv. 45.
- Königseck, Graf von, xxiii. 211, with Prince Karl, xxv. 157; at Chotusitz, 184; at Dresden, xxvi. 37; in the Netherlands, 56; at Fontenoy, 57; ordered to Prag, xxvii. 145, 147; defeated at Reichenberg, 148, 149.
- Königsmark tragedy, the, xxi. 35.
- Königsmark, Aurora von, xxv. 109.
- Konopisch, Camp of, xxv. 425.
- Köppen, Lieutenant, xxi. 444.
- Koran, the, xii. 76.
- Korbach, Fight of, xxix. 43, 44.
- Korbitz, Action of, xxviii. 276.
- Korf, General, introduces Hordt to the Russian Court, xxix. 273, 277; great expectations of the new reign, 276.
- Korff, Baroness de, in flight to Varennes, iii. 197; is Dame de Tourzel, 202.
- Kosel, xxvi. 49: cited, 106 n.
- Köslin, Town in Pommern, xxiv. 45.
- Kotzebue, August von, a warning to all playwrights, vii. 122; viii. 314, 318; x. 227.
- Krentzen, Colonel, at Liège, xxiv. 105.
- Kriele, Johann Ludwig, on Kunersdorf, xxviii. 202, 212, 228, 232: cited, 201 n.
- Krocher, Colonel, xxii. 409.
- Krockow, commander of Prussian vanguard at Domstättl, xxviii. 41; recommends the French Excise-system to Friedrich, xxix. 377.
- Krusemark, Colonel, xxix. 227, 231.
- Kunersdorf, xxiii. 57; battle of, xxviii. 207-234; description of the country, 209-212.
- Kunz von Kauffungen, xxi. 223; xxii. 411.
- Kuppisch, cess-collector, xxx. 181.
- Kur-Baiern, the young, xxvi. 24, 41, 44.
- Kurfürsts and their function, xxi. 96; the Twelve Hohenzollerns, 386.
- Kurisees, Irish, go abroad, xv. 296; in Piedmont, xvii. 134.
- Kur-Köln dances with Wilhelmina at Frankfurt, xxv. 139.
- Kur-Mainz, xxv. 278, 311.
- Kur-Pfalz, xxiv. 363. See Philip.
- Kur-Sachsen protests against Pragmatic Sanction, xxiv. 357; helps Belleisle, 363; "King of Moravia," 373; Copartnery with France and Bavaria, xxv. 77, 107, 110, 121; green diamond, 157; resentment against Friedrich, 159; mentioned also, xxiv. 270, 277, 283, 349. See August III. of Poland.
- Kurt, xxii. 475. See Schwerin.
- Küster, army chaplain, xxix. 161, 162, 221, 225: cited, xxiv. 27 n.; xxix. 162 n.
- Kutzen, cited, xxvii. 214 n.
- Kyau, General, takes Bevern's command, and retires towards Glogau, xxvii. 369; superseded by Ziethen, 372.
- LABOUR, sacredness of, i. 220; and free effort, viii. 359; infinite significance of, ix. 313; true organisation of, xi. 181; only the Noble labour willingly with their whole strength, 183; to be king of this earth, xiii. 212; organisation of, 243, 260, 318; xix. 43; perennial nobleness and sacredness in, xiii. 244. See Industry, Work, Working Classes, Chivalry.

- Lacroetelle, cited, xxii. 92 n.
 Lacroix, of Mountain, iii. 257.
 Lacy, Marshal, xxiii. 201, 265; xxiv. 189; commands the Russian Army, 267; at Riga, 285: mentioned also, xxvi. 221.
 Lacy, Junior, xxiv. 189; at Hochkirch, xxviii. 97; Keith's chief-mourner, 112; message to Soltikof, 246; urges Daun, 319; with Daun in Saxony, xxix. 5, 9, 12; follows Friedrich's march for Silesia, 18; vanishes from Lichtenberg at Friedrich's approach, 19; skirmish of horse at Godau, 22; hastily quits Godau, 24; arrives in Dresden, 24; leaves Dresden to its fate, 28; with Daun attends Friedrich's march into Silesia, 55-58; at battle of Liegnitz, 61, 65, 71, joins with the Russians to seize Berlin, 89; flies into open rage at Tottleben's terms of capitulation, 98; for three days the evil genius of Berlin, 94, off quicker than he came, at Friedrich's approach, 97; with Daun in battle of Torgau, 116, 126, 129; in retreat, 130; defeated at Reichenbach, 309, 310; in the Bavarian War, xxx. 161, 162: mentioned also, 5, 6, 18, 23, 221.
 Ladies taken at Naseby, xiv. 223; at Basing House, 248.
 Lafarge, President of Jacobins, Madame Laverne and, iv. 18.
 Lafayette, bust of, erected, ii. 56, 248; against Calonne, 90; demands by, in Notables, 97; Cromwell-Grandison, 180; Bastille time, Vice-President of National Assembly, 229, 246; General of National Guard, 249; resigns and reaccepts, 258; Scipio-Americanus, 288; thanked, rewarded, 300; French Guards and, 321; to Versailles, 322; at Versailles, Fifth October, 340; swears the Guards, 353; Feuillant, iii. 42; on abolition of Titles, 65; at Champ de-Mars Federation, 78, 81; at De Castries' riot, 145; character of, 148; in Day of Pontiards, 160; difficult position of, 163; at King's going to St. Cloud, 188; resigns and reaccepts, 189; at flight from Tuileries, 199; after escape of King, 204; on Petition for Deposition, 237; moves for amnesty, 248; resigns, 251, decline of, 299; doubtful against Jacobins, 314, 318, 334; fruitless journey to Paris, 328, to be accused? 340; flies to Holland, 377; prisoner in Olmutz, xxviii. 28: mentioned also, xxx. 236, 253.
 Lafitte, prison-plot informer, iv. 321, 336.
 La Force. See Prison.
 Laïs, Sieur, Jacobin, with Louis-Philippe, in. 41.
 Laissez-faire, x. 340; applied to horses, 352; has as good as done its part in many provinces, 368, 422; when a reasonable cry, 370; xiii. 229; general breakdown of, 232, 233.
 Lakenheath eels, xiii. 81.
 Lally, Count, at Fontenoy, xxvi. 67; at Madras, xxviii. 125; nearly the most unfortunate and worst-used 'man of genius,' 312, 313; death of, ii. 107. See Tollendal.
 Lamaism, Grand, xii. 7.
 Lamarche, guillotined, iv. 262.
 Lamarck's, Mirabeau sick at, iii. 173.
 Lamartine, M. de, at the Hôtel-de-Ville, xix. 9.
 Lamballe, Princess de, to England, iii. 209; intrigues for Royalists, 280, 306; at La Force, iv. 23; massacred, 39.
 Lambert, General, described, xiv. 290; in the North, xv. 11; at Edinburgh, 69, 76, 80; at Pontefract, 103; Major-General in Scots War, xvi. 11; skirmishes with the Scots, 15, 17; at Dunbar battle, 41, 50; routs Colonel Ker, 97, 99, at Glasgow, 148; routs General Browne at Inverkeithing, 156, 157; at Worcester battle, 174; in the Highlands, 185; of Council of State, xvii. 8 n.; in Cromwell's First Parliament, 23; a Major-General of Counties, 155 n.; against title of King, xviii. 79; dismissed, 80.
 Lambert, M. de St., xxvi. 215, 236.
 Lambesc, Prince, attacks Bust-procession (July 1789), ii. 219.
 Lameth, in Constituent Assembly, one of a trio, ii. 275; brothers, notice of, iii. 10; Jacobins, 89; Charles, duel

- with Duke de Castries, 145; brothers become constitutional, 233; Theodore, in First Parliament, 257.
- Lammermoor Hills described, xvi. 34; Scots Army at, 35.
- Lamoignon, Keeper of Seals, ii. 92, 113, 121; dismissed, 138; effigy burned, and death of, 140.
- Lamotte, Countess de, and Diamond Necklace, ii. 70, in the Salpêtrière, 86, 117; 'Memoirs' burned, iii. 295; in London, iv. 22; M. de, in prison, 22, 44.
- Lamotte-Valois, the Countess de, ix. 376; her pedigree, birth, character and career, x. 33-91.
- Lamourette, Abbé, kiss of, iii. 261; guillotined, iv. 269.
- Landlords, past and present, xiii. 67; Land-owning, 215; whom the Land belongs to, 218; the mission of a Land Aristocracy a *sacred* one, 305, 348.
- Land-owning, trade of, i. 124.
- Landshtut, xxv. 98; Protestants of, xxvi. 100.
- Langdale, Sir Marmaduke, joins Scots, xv. 11; escapes, 86.
- Lange, xxii. 180; Wolf's old enemy, xxiv. 207.
- Lange, Major, killed at Hochkirch, xxviii. 103.
- Langensalza, fight of, xxix. 164-166.
- Langley, Colchester Captain, xiv. 142.
- Langport, battle of, xviii. 206.
- Language, the Garment of Thought, i. 70; dead vocables, 105.
- Lanjuinais, Girondin, skirts torn, iv. 200; arrested, 202, recalled, 361.
- Lanterne, death by the, ii. 256, 257.
- Lapérouse, voyage of, ii. 56.
- Laporte, Intendant, guillotined, iv. 14.
- Larivière, Justice, imprisoned, iii. 331.
- Larochejaquelin in La Vendée, iv. 17; death of, 371.
- Lasource accuses Danton, iv. 185; president and Marat, 190; arrested, 201; condemned, his saving, 247.
- Latin, learning, xxii. 19. See Education.
- Latour, De, xxvi. 85, 88.
- Latour, Father, chief Jesuit, xxvi. 203.
- Latour-Maubourg, notice of, iii. 230.
- Lattorf defends Kosel, xxviii. 117.
- Laud, William, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, xiv. 41; finds no religion in Scotland, 45; persecutions by, 54; inclined to Popery, 65; Parliament intends to accuse, 66; accompanies Charles I. to Scotland, 73; roots out Feoffees, 74, is in the Tower, 110, 123, beheaded, 280.
- Lauderdale, Earl, taken at Worcester, xvi. 179; incident to, in London, 182; notice of, 182.
- Lauffeld, battle of, xxvi. 198 n., 217.
- Laughern, Lieut.-Col., shot, xv. 283.
- Laughern, Major-General, revolts, xv. 3; condemned to death, 122.
- Laughter, significance of, i. 32; worth of true, xi. 237; xiii. 189.
- Launay, Marquis de, Governor of Bastille, ii. 229; besieged, 234; unassisted, 235; to blow-up Bastille, 240, 242; massacred, 243.
- Launay, De, head of the Excise department, xxix. 379, 383, 384; xxx. 266.
- Lausitz, xxi. 74, 76.
- Lautensack, Prussian Secretary, xxiv. 34.
- Lauterburg, Lines of, xxv. 387.
- Lavater and Cagliostro, ix. 365.
- Laveaux, Editor, xxiv. 19 n., 85; xxvi. 450, 452 n.; xxix. 384 n.
- Lavergne, surrenders Longwi, iv. 16-19.
- Lavoisier, chemist, guillotined, iv. 326.
- Law, martial, in Paris, iii. 23. 238; Book of the, 259; gradual growth of, xiii. 163; the Maker's laws, 284; reform of, xvi. 205, 206, 213, 271; and Church, angry basilisks of, xix. 228; injustice decreed by a 'law,' 358; omnipresence of, xxvi. 116; reform of, xxiv. 13; xxvi. 190, 191, 239-241. See Chancery.
- Law, the finance-wizard, xxii. 4, 92.
- Lawrence, Col. Henry, of Council of State, xvii. 8 n.
- Laws and regulations of the Universe, how decipher the, xix. 21, 93; such laws do verily exist, silent, but inflexibly sure, 246; not to be decided by our paltry 'votings,' 283; in the way of abatement, of oblivion, nei-

- ther gods nor men prevail, 346. See Universe.
- Lawyers, their influence on the Revolution, ii. 15; number of, in Tiers Etat, 179; in Parliament First, iii. 225; supreme stump-orators, xix. 341, 381.
- Lazare, Maison de St., plundered, ii. 224.
- Lea Hamlet, described, xiv. 160.
- Lebas, at Strasburg, iv. 290; arrested, 346.
- Lebon, priest, in National Convention, iv. 63, at Arras, 276; guillotined, 379.
- Lebrun, forger of assignats, iii. 285.
- Lechapelier, Deputy, and Insurrection of Women, ii. 319.
- Lecointre, National Major, ii. 305, 330; will not duel, 308, active, 334; in First Parliament, iii. 258.
- Lecouvreur, Adrienne, xxii. 230; xxiii. 14.
- Lecturers, running, described, xiv. 53, 93.
- Ledard, cited, xxii. 274 n.
- Lee, from America, at Berlin, xxx. 128-131.
- Lefebvre, Mining Engineer, at siege of Schweidnitz, xxix. 307, 311-316; writes to Formey of the meeting of Friedrich and Kaiser Joseph, xxx. 5-8; in a fit of excitement destroys himself, 8.
- Lefèvre, Abbé, distributes powder, ii. 244; in procession, 249, is nearly hanged, 316.
- Legendre, butcher, in danger, iii. 315, at Tuileries riot, 322; in National Convention, iv. 63; against Girondins, 199; for Danton, 318; locks out Jacobins, 350; in First of Prairial, 383.
- Legge, ex-exchequer, xxvi. 245; xxvii. 242.
- Legislation. See Assembly.
- Legislative interference, xiii. 326.
- Lehmann, Dr., xxix. 261 n.
- Lehunt, Col., commissioned, xv. 14.
- Lehwald, General, xxv. 181; at Habelschwert, xxvi. 10; at Sohr, 134; joins the Old Dessauer at Meissen, 180 to defend the Baltic parts, xxvii. 143, 244, 250, 295; resignation, xxviii. 9, 13; assists in defending Berlin, xxix. 90.
- Leibnitz, xxi. 34; Leibnitzian 'justification of the ways of God,' 38; sage Leibnitz a rather weak but hugely ingenious old gentleman, 47, 53; xxii. 84, Letter, quoted by König, xxvi. 379. cited, xxi. 74 n.
- Leicester taken and retaken, xiv. 218, 226.
- Leipe, hamlet near Grotkau, xxiv. 304.
- Leipzig, xxii. 410, Treaty of, xxvii. 10; under Prussian military contribution, xxix. 169.
- Leith Citadel built by Cromwell, xvi. 186.
- Leland's Itinerary, xiv. 33.
- Leming-rat, the, xix. 290.
- Lemon, Mr., classified Records, xv. 117.
- Lenfant, Abbé, on Protestant claims, ii. 118, massacred, iv. 43.
- Lenthall, Hon. William, Speaker, Cromwell's letters to, xiv. 224, 233, 245, 252, 310; xv. 4, 16, 29, 67, 77, 78, 149, 159, 173, 181, 184, 206, 212, 219, 226, 261, 283; xvi. 9, 45, 98, 114, 136, 138, 155, 164, 165, 177, 178; xviii. 187, 210, 212, 226; Conference at his house, xvi. 200-203; unseated, 224; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 22, 49; against Law Reform, 133; on Committee of Kingship, 297, 306; one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Lentulus, General, xxiv. 272, 297, 301, 303; xxv. 87; xxix. 217, 238; xxx. 14, 48, 112.
- Lentulus, Lieut.-Colonel, xxvii. 266; xxviii. 295.
- Lenz, President of East Friesland, xxviii. 19.
- Leo X., the elegant Pagan Pope, xii. 156; xxi. 229.
- Leon, Herr von, xxii. 56.
- Leopold, Archduke, at siege of Jülich, xxi. 321.
- Leopold, Richard's, Duke of Austria, a man with some stuff in him, xxi. 112.
- Leopold, Kaiser, xxi. 61, 353, 366, 372; xxii. 99.
- Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, xi. 286; xxi. 31, 93, 159, 377, 399; xxii. 35,

- 171, 180; xxiii. 150; a rugged practical man, of dreadful impetuosity, xxi. 401, 405; Fox's Daughter, 401; kills a Cousin of hers, and marries her, 402; inventor of modern military tactics, 403; xxiii. 22; General Fieldmarshal of the Prussian Armies, xxi. 404; at Blenheim, Bridge of Cassano, Lines of Turin, 405; xxii. 426; at the Siege of Stralsund, xxi. 444; challenges Grumkow, xxii. 147, leaves him and the Court in disgust, 147; at King August's Camp of Radewitz, xxii. 381; takes Mörs Castle, 457; favours Friedrich at Cüstrin, 484; xxiii. 8, 80, assists in his military studies, 117; sends the King tall recruits, 147; the Rhine Campaign, 217, 241, 265; visits the French Camp, 248; with the King at Belgard, 390; at his death, 418; interview with King Friedrich, 423; reproved by Friedrich, xxiv. 158; private consultations, 268; congratulated on his Son's success, 293; takes Camp at Gottin, 294; at Brandenburg, xxv. 157, meets Friedrich at Chrudim, 160; preferred before Schwerin, 163; neglect of orders, 166; sharp bantering of Walrave, 169; takes charge of the Silesian Army, xxvi. 6; Friedrich's impatience, 7; repels Silesian invasion, 8-12; home with thanks, 45; just lost his Wife, 45; his sick Daughter, 45; takes charge of a Camp of Observation against Saxony, 51, 110; his *feu-de-jour* for the Victory of Sohr; 138; home for the Winter, 141; new preparations for Saxony, 144; hard words from the King, 145; enters Saxony, 156; marches against Rutowski, 159-162; Victory at Kesselsdorf, 162-166; his battle-prayer, 164; glorious in the last of his fields, 167; conducts the King over the battle-field, 168; death, 167.
- Leopold, the Young Dessauer, xxiv. 61; with Friedrich at Strasburg, 65; on the road to Silesia, 178; before Glogau, 212; skilful capture, 287; joins the King at Schweidnitz, 295; crosses Sorgan Bridge, 303; at Mollwitz, 320, 326, 331; at Breslau, xxv. 54; in the Glatz country, 91, 123, 126; at Chrudim, 160, 174; on march, 176; at Chotusitz, 179; on march to Prag, 397; towards Austria, 410; quarrels with Schwerin, 414; is for keeping hold of Prag, 431; near Koln, 432; on retreat towards Silesia, 435; in Silesia, worn down with gout, xxvi. 12; left to command in Silesia, 136; watching Prince Karl, 141; draws out his forces, 145.
- Leopold, Duke of Florence, afterwards Kaiser, xxix. 396.
- Leopold, Prince of Brunswick, helps Miller Arnold to justice, xxx. 183; gets drowned in struggling to save others, 184.
- Lepel, Major-General, xxiii. 42.
- Lepelletier, Section, for Convention, iv. 376, 383; revolt of, in Vendémiaire, 394-397. See St. Fargeau.
- Lesley, Alexander, Fieldmarshal, at Dunse Law, xiv. 104; Earl of Leven, enters England with Scots Army in 1644, 185; at Marston Moor, 192; cannonades the Hamilton Engagers from Edinburgh Castle, xv. 43; entertains Cromwell at dinner, 76; at Alyth, and sent to the Tower, xvi. 184.
- Lesley, General David, extinguishes Montrose, xiv. 253; at head of Kirk Party, xv. 43; General of Scots, xvi. 19, 155; his caution, 24; letter to Cromwell, 25; Cromwell's letters to, 26, 121; and the English soldier at Dunbar, 39.
- Lesley, Ludovic, Governor of Berwick, Cromwell's letter to, xv. 53.
- Lessing, character of, vi. 56; xxvi. 120; Taudentzien's chief clerk, xxviii. 141; cited, xxix. 53 n.; mentioned also, 52, 335.
- L'Estoc, surgeon to Elizabeth of Russia, xxiv. 260.
- L'Estrange, Roger, xiv. 174.
- Lestwitz, General, surrenders Breslau to the Austrians, xxvii. 370; with Friedrich at Torgau, xxix. 127, 128.
- Letter-writing, conventional, x. 256; subjective, 312; veracious, xi. 35; vacuous and inane, 37.

- Lettres-de-Cachet and Parlement of Paris, ii. 115.
- Leuthen, battle of, xxi. 10; xxvii. 382-402.
- Levasseur in National Convention, iv. 64; Convention Representative, in tide-water, 294.
- Levellers described, xiv. 309; Arnald shot, 313; remarks on, xv. 137-139; routed at Burford, 143.
- Leven, Earl of. See Lesley, Alexander.
- Leverett, Capt., Cromwell's Letter to, xviii. 278.
- Lewin, xxiii. 153.
- Lexden Heath, Camp on, xxv. 6, 219.
- Liancourt, Duke de, Liberal, ii. 180; not a revolt, but a revolution, 247; Royalist, in Normandy, iii. 331.
- Libberton, Lord, killed at Dunbar, xvi. 52.
- Liberty, iii. 34; tree of, 81, 319, 339; and equality, 307; xii. 150, 240; statue of, iv. 228, what really meant by, xi. 346; new definitions of, 368, 369; true meaning of, xvi. 263, 269; of the people, xiv. 81; British, xix. 36; cause of, xxv. 9. See Enfranchisement.
- Lichnowski, Col., at Landshut, xxix. 14.
- Lichtenau, Gräfin von, xxix. 386.
- Lichtenberg, xxi. 279.
- Lichtenstein, Graf von, lodges King Friedrich, xxv. 129.
- Lichtenstein, Prince von, xxiii. 235, 263; xxv. 72; xxvii. 160, 167: cited, 160 n.
- Lie, a, xxi. 12, 19; galvanised, 259. See Fiction, Mendacity
- Lieberkuhn, Dr., xxvi. 267, 347, 356.
- Liebstadt, review at, xxiv. 45.
- Liège, xxiv. 101. See Affair of Herstal.
- Liège, Bishop of, xxiii. 254.
- Liegnitz, Duke of, xxi. 236, 248, 254; Heritage-Brotherhood with Joachim II., 289; what comes of it, 366.
- Liegnitz, described, xxiii. 151; entered by Schwerin, xxiv. 209; xxix. 62; battle of, 61-71.
- Lies, French Philosophism on, ii. 16; to be extinguished, how, 47; cant, a double power of, 67; their doom, 283; 'damned,' xix. 170; every lie ac-
- cursed and the parent of curses, 19a, diagnosis of a lie and a liar, 242; benevolent plan of reform, 252; subtle quintessence of lying, 373.
- Lieschen, i. 22.
- Life, human, picture of, i. 20, 146, 165, 180; life-purpose, 180; speculative mystery of, 160, 232, 255; the most important transaction in, 163; nothingness of, 175, 178; a means to an end, viii. 331; infinite mystery of, ix. 311; x. 7; the life to come, xii. 208, 286; never a May-game for men, 261, 357. See Man.
- Light, the beginning of all Creation, i. 188; or *lightning*, a choice, xix. 152, 223.
- Ligne, Prince de, xxi. 210; xxv. 276; his account of the battle of Leuthen, xxvii. 394, 404, in Berlin, xxix. 95; at Burkersdorf, 299. his account of Friedrich's visit to Kaiser Joseph, xxx. 14-26; visits Friedrich at Potsdam, 217, 218; hurries off to Petersburg, 228; death of, iv. 66: cited, 15 n.
- Ligonier, xxvi. 198 n., 225; his Dragoons, xxv. 220, 276.
- Lilburn, Col. Robert, in Lancashire, xv. 11; routs Earl Derby, xvi. 169; and Bear Park, 136; deputy Major-General, xvii. 155 n.
- Lilburn, John, account of, xiv. 111; his brothers, 267, accuses Cromwell, 318, his pamphlets, xv. 130; death of, xviii. 97.
- Lille, Colonel Rouget de, and Marseillaise Hymn, iii. 338.
- Lille, Abbé de, xxx. 218.
- Lille city, besieged, iv. 75.
- Lincoln Committee, Cromwell's letter to, xiv. 149.
- Lincolnshire in 1643, xiv. 145, 147, 180-182.
- Lindauer of Sangerhausen, xxvii. 359.
- Linden, Major, at Kunersdorf, xxviii. 213, 221.
- Lindsey's, Reverend Mr., Works on Poland, xxix. 402 n.; xxx. 60, 61.
- Linger, xxiii. 8.
- linguet, his 'Bastille Unveiled,' ii. 69; returns, 169; irascible, iii. 296.
- Linsensbarth's, Candidatus, interview with Friedrich, xxvi. 251-263, 369.

- Lintz, or Linz, **xxi.** 329; Karl Albert at, **xxv.** 76.
- Lion. See *Soirées*.
- Lippe-Bückeburg, **xxiii.** 362, 368.
- Lippe-Bückeburg, Ordnance Master, **xxix.** 160; entertains a select dinner-party in his tent, 167; takes command of the English forces in Portugal, 245, 247.
- Lisbon, Earthquake of, **xxvi.** 449.
- Lisle, Lord Viscount, in Council of State, **xv.** 124; **xvi.** 271 n.; **xvii.** 8 n.
- Lisle, Mr., in Council of State, **xv.** 124; Keeper of Great Seal, **xvii.** 183; at Installation, **xviii.** 85.
- Lisle, Sir George, shot, **xv.** 42.
- List of Cromwell family, **xiv.** 23, 28, 70; of the Eleven Members, 295 n.; of Officers slain at Tredah, **xv.** 182; of Little Parliament, **xvi.** 229, 230; of Council of State, 1653, 271 n.; 1654, **xvii.** 8 n.; of Long Parliament, **xvi.** 279-312; of Cromwell's First Parliament, **xvii.** 22; of Major-Generals, 155 n.; of Cromwell's estates, 190 n.; of Cromwell's Lords, **xviii.** 101.
- Literary life, temptations, perils and heroisms of a, **v.** 51, 127, 233, Men, a perpetual priesthood, **vi.** 69; **vii.** 165, 336; **viii.** 96, 323; **ix.** 256; desirable to pay them by the quantity they *do not* write, **x.** 218; Hero as literary man, **xii.** 183; in China, 199. See Newspaper-Editors.
- Literature, its influence on the Revolution, **ii.** 16, in France, in 1781-87, 69, 73, 118; wide arena of, **vii.** 165; **viii.** 324; diseased self-consciousness, 355; froth and substance, **ix.** 18; **xi.** 88; lies in domain of belief, **ix.** 230; literary shampooings, **x.** 252, 278; its flesh-flies, 263; extempore writing, 275; subjective writing, 312; its rapid fermentations, **xi.** 364-366; chaotic condition of, **xii.** 188; is not our heaviest evil, 201; noble and ignoble, **xiii.** 129; true and sham, **xix.** 202, 255; **xx.** 191; our crowded portal of, **xix.** 231; highest problem of, 340, 382; a chaotic haven, **xx.** 51; and last re-
- source, 150, 172, 177; romantic appetite for, **xxii.** 72; literary fame, 179; **xxiii.** 295, book-writing, of two kinds, **xxii.** 182; **xxiii.** 369; something grander than all literatures, 321; Friedrich's literary attainments, 376. See Newspaper, Read, Review-articles.
- Lithuania, **xxiii.** 385.
- Liturgies, **xiii.** 162; such as no God *can* hear, **xix.** 337.
- Liverpool, **xvii.** 83.
- Livingston, Rev. James, notice of, by Cromwell, **xvi.** 100; his descendants, 102.
- Llanblethian, a pleasant little Welsh village, **xx.** 18, 20.
- Lloyd, Capt., sent to Generals Blake and Montague, **xvii.** 182.
- Lloyd, Major-General, **xxvii.** 84, 91 n., 92, 93: cited, **xxv.** 119 n.; **xxvii.** 84 n., 162 n., 337.
- Loadstar, a, in the eternal sky, **xiii.** 45.
- Loan, Successive, scheme of, **ii.** 112.
- Lobkowitz, Prince, joins with Grand-Duke Franz in Bohemia, **xxv.** 114; at Iglau, 151; at Waidhofen, 155; near Frauenberg, 172, 190; takes Leitmeritz from the French, 256; to watch Belleisle at Prag, 256-259; with Prince Karl at Königsgrätz, **xxvi.** 118, 119, Hennersdorf, 149: mentioned also, **xxv.** 271; **xxvi.** 142.
- Lobositz, battle of, **xxvii.** 84-96.
- Locke and his followers, **vi.** 92; paved the way for banishing Religion from the world, 251; **vii.** 322; wrote his *Essay* in a Dutch garret, 64; Tomb of, **xv.** 100; **xxi.** 310.
- Lockhart, William, Ensign, **xiv.** 278; Colonel, wounded at Preston, **xv.** 27; Ambassador to France, **xvii.** 262; notice of, **xviii.** 89, 90; commands at Dunkirk, 96; one of Cromwell's Lords, 101; Cromwell's letters to, 91, 93, 155. See Sewster.
- Lockhart, Sterling's admiring estimate of, **xx.** 284; his Life of Burns, **vii.** 3; of Scott, **x.** 217.
- Lockier, Rev., preaches at Cromwell's Installation, **xvi.** 274.
- Lockyer, Trooper, shot, **xv.** 140.

Loftus, Sir Arthur, notice of, xv. 218.
 Logau, Silesian poet, xxiv. 176.
 Logic, the rushlight of, vii. 334; and its limits, viii. 334; ix. 289; x. 103; Logic-mortar and wordy air-castles, i. 52; underground workshop of, 66, 214. See *Metaphysics*.
 Logical futilities, xiii. 199, 202.
 Loigle, Marquis de, at Strasburg, xxiv. 72.
 Loiserolles, General, guillotined for his son, iv. 349.
 London houses and house-building, xi. 374-5; City petitions for Parliament, xiv. 106; for Reform of Bishops, 108, 122; helps Long Parliament to raise army, 124; fortified, 1643, 152; armies fitted out by, 201; petitions for peace, 271; new militia ordinance, 287, shops shut, 169, 296, 297; averse to Cromwell party, 334; lends money, xv. 133; Preacher recommended to, xvii. 18; Cromwell entertained by, 65; will resist Cromwell's enemies, xviii. 145.
 Longchamp, Intendant, and Madame Denis, xxvi. 280: cited, 236 n.
 Longchamp et Wagnière, cited, xxviii. 365 n.; xxx. 153 n.
 Longwi surrendered, iv. 15-19; fugitives at Paris, 18.
 Loo, Palace of, xxiii. 358.
 Lope de Vega, x. 226.
 Loper, M., xxvi. 304.
 Lords of the Articles, Jacobins, as, iv. 288.
 Lorraine, Fédérés and the Queen, iii. 74; state of (in 1790), 103.
 Lorraine, Leopold Joseph, Duke of, xxii. 258; Charles, 258 n.; Franz Stephan, 259; xxiii. 13, 102, 206, 271; visits Potsdam, 108, 113; at Kolitz, 351; end of Turk War, 401; Karl of, xxii. 259; Lorraine taken by the French, xxiii. 207, 271.
 Lossow, General von, xxx. 115, 164.
 Lothar, Kaiser, xxi. 91, 95.
 Lottum, Count, xxii. 5.
 Lottum, Colonel, xxx. 301.
 Loudon, Chancellor, in danger, xiv. 105; Cromwell's letter to, xv. 59; character of, 62.
 Loudon, with Fieldmarshal Browne,

xxvii. 121; near Leitmeritz, annoys the Prussian retreat, 238; attacked by Seidlitz in Saxony, 282; 'Commission of Major-General' taken by Seidlitz in Gotha, 292, 293; with Daun near Olmütz, xxviii. 33, 35-39; attacks and ruins Mosel's convoy, 38-44; at Holitz, 45; captures Peitz, 85; with Daun in Saxony, 88; Hochkirch, 93, 97, 116; in the Lausitz, 167; to join with Soltikof, 170-187; arrives at Frankfurt, but without provisions, 204; battle of Kunersdorf, 207, 213, 217, 222; ends the battle, 226, 234; continues with Soltikof, 245, 285, 300; may go where he pleases; dismal march into Moravia, 301; to have a separate command and army of his own, 383; in Silesia, 383, 386; prepares to attack Goltz, 388; beaten off in every attempt, 389; threatens Silesia, xxix. 5, 7, 37; blockades Glatz, 8; ruins Fouquet at Landshut, 13-15; captures Glatz, 35-37, on march for Breslau, 48; difficulties with Soltikof, 49; besieges Breslau, and threatens 'riously, 50; moves off at the approach of Prince Henri, 51; joins with Daun and Lacy to intercept Friedrich, 57; at battle of Liegnitz, 61; tries to surprise Friedrich, and is himself surprised at the reception he gets, 67; behaves magnificently in his sudden peril, 68; sorely but not dishonourably beaten, 69; to try for a stroke on Kosel, 103; but without success, 132; retires to Bohemia, to prepare for a new campaign, 183; to be joined by the Russians and reconquer Silesia, 184; skilfully effects junction, 188; gets beforehand with Friedrich at Kunzendorf, 189; astonished at his Camp of Bunzelwitz, 191, 192; earnestly urges Butturlin to join him in attacking, 193; Butturlin positively refuses, and returns homewards, 195, 196; he suddenly pounces upon Schweidnitz, and captures it in one night, 216-221; gets small thanks from Vienna, 222; no longer to command-in-chief, 289; he visits

- Friedrich, with the Kaiser, xxx. 5, 6; complimented by Friedrich, 22, 23; in the Bavarian War, 161.
- Loudon, Lord, commander of the forces in America, xxvii. 203, 204; recalled, xviii. 22; Cousin to the Austrian Loudon, 22 n.
- Louis Ferdinand, xxii. 97; xxiii. 417.
- Louis, Fort, xxiii. 222.
- Louis XIV., *l'état c'est moi*, ii. 11; booted in Parlement, 113; pursues Louvois with tongs, iv. 91; feats of, xxi. 353, 362, 363, 366, 376, 438; xxii. 44, 100; death of, xxi. 380; bankrupt condition of, 440: mentioned also, xxiv. 252, 347; xxv. 285; xxvi. 207.
- Louis XV., ungodly age of, i. 158; vii. 238; ix. 232, 270; x. 21; his *amende honorable* to God, 26; origin of his surname, ii. 1; last illness of, 1, 17, 19, 20, 26; dismisses Dame Dubarry, 3; Choiseul, 3; was wounded, has small-pox, 4, 18; his mode of conquest, 6; impoverishes France, 16; his daughters, 19; on death, 22; on ministerial capacity, 25; xxi. 161, xxi. 119, 121; xxiii. 197; changes his shirt, xxiv. 241, 244, is a poor demigod, 366; lame story for himself to the German Diet, xxv. 299; declares war against England and Austria, 359; is in the Netherlands, 383; falls ill at Metz, 389; dismisses Châteauroux, 389; recovers, 392, besieges Freyburg, 415; not much taken with Voltaire, 416; xxvi. 201, 205; hastens to Tournay, 57; at Fontenoy, 66, 68; help to Friedrich impossible, 109; evident pique, 110, 158; xxvii. 135; xxviii. 338; tired of war, xxvi. 227; determines to aid Austria, xxvii. 76, 119; death of (10 May 1744), ii. 28; burial of, 29.
- Louis XVI., at his accession, ii. 29; good measures of, 36; temper and pursuits of, 38; his Queen (see Antoinette); difficulties of, 50, 119, commences governing, 79; and Notables, 96; holds Royal Session, 113-115; receives States-General Deputies, 165; in States-General procession, 167, 183; speech to States-General, 185; National Assembly, 205; unwise policy of, 207; dismisses Necker, 217; apprised of the Revolution, 247; conciliatory, visits Assembly, 248; Bastille, visits Paris, 251; deserted, will fly, 277, 303; languid, 305; at Dinner of Guards, 306; deposition of, proposed, 321; October Fifth, women deputies, 330; to fly or not? 334, 336; grants the acceptance, 338; Paris propositions to, 341; in the Château tumult (Oct. 6), 349; appears to mob, 352; will go to Paris, 353; his wisest course, 354; procession to Paris, 356-359; review of his position, iii. 5; lodged at Tuileries, 6; Restorer of French Liberty, 7; no hunting, locksmith, 8; schemes, 44; visits Assembly, 45; Federation, 71, 73, 77; Hereditary Representative, 148, 192; will fly, 150; and D'Inisdal's plot, 150; his Aunts fly, 155; Mirabeau, 167; useless, 168; indecision of, 185; ill of catarrh, 187; prepares for St. Cloud, 188; hindered by populace, 188; effect, should he escape, 189; prepares for flight, his circular, 196; flies, 198; letter to Assembly, 205; manner of flight, 209; loiters by the way, 210-213; detected by Drouet, 216; near Varennes, 220; captured at Varennes, 222; indecision there, 222-226; return to Paris, 229; reception there, 230; to be deposed? 233-235; reinstated, 243; reception of Legislative, 259; position of, 276; proposes war, with tears, 308; vetoes, dissolves Roland Ministry, 316; in riot of Twentieth June, 323; and Pétion, 330, 356, at Federation, with curass, 339; declared forfeited, 352, 374; last levee of, 353; Tenth August, 363, 365; quits Tuileries for Assembly, 366; in Assembly, 373; sent to Temple prison, 376; in Temple, iv. 102; to be tried, 107, 115; and the locksmith Gamain, 113; at the bar, 117; his will, 119; condemned, 127-132, parting scene, 135; execution of, 136-139; his son, 326; xxix. 401.
- Louis-Philippe (King of the French)

- Jacobin door-keeper, iii. 41, at Valmy, iv. 73; bravery at Jemappes, 107; and sister, 181; with Dumouriez to Austrians, 183; to Switzerland, 184; teaches Mathematics, 261.
- Louis-Philippism, the scorn of the world, xix. 7.
- Louisa Amelia of Brunswick betrothed, xxiv. 127.
- Louisa, Old Dessauer's eldest daughter, xxvi. 45.
- Louisa of Nassau-Orange, Wife of the Great Kurfürst, xxi. 364, 367.
- Louisa of Prussia, xxiii. 341.
- Louisa Ulrique, xxi. 458; xxii. 96.
- Louisburg, in Cape Breton, captured by Amherst, xxviii. 49.
- Loustalot, Editor, ii. 291; iii. 35.
- Louvet, his 'Chevalier de Faublas,' ii. 74; his 'Sentinelles,' iii. 36; and Robespierre, 303; in National Convention, iv. 63; Girondin accuses Robespierre, 110, 164, arrested, 201; retreats (one of Eleven) to Bourdeaux, 221, 236; escape of, 249; recalled, 361.
- Love, what we emphatically name, i. 131; pyrotechnic phenomena of, 132, 213; not altogether a delirium, 139; how possible, in its highest form, 182, 208, 284; the beginning of all things, ix. 18, 119, method of, to command Scoundrels, xix. 68.
- Love, Dr., Cromwell's letter to, xv. 123.
- Love, Rev. Christopher, notice of, xiv. 190; xv. 123; his treason, xvi. 152; condemned, 155; executed, 170.
- Löwen, King Friedrich at, xxiv. 331.
- Lowendahl, Lieutenant, xxvi. 220.
- Lowestoff, affair at, xiv. 137.
- Lowry, John, notice of, xv. 150, 151; xviii. 181.
- Loyalty to Beelzebub, xix. 370.
- Loyola, Ignatius, xix. 353; a man not good by nature, 362; on the walls of Pampeluna, agonies of new-birth, 362; highest pitch of the prurient-heroic, war against Almighty God, 365. See Jesuitism.
- Lubomirski, Princess, Friedrich lodges with, xxvi. 169, 171.
- Lucas, Sir Charles, shot, xv. 42.
- Lucchesi at Breslau, xxvii. 378; Lenthén, 388, 393; death, 396.
- Lucchesini, Marchese, xxx. 210, 225, 260.
- Lückner, Supreme General, iii. 88, 314; and Dumouriez, 334; guillotined, iv. 265.
- Lüderitz, General, xxvii. 95; xxx. 288.
- Ludicrous, feeling and instances of the, i. 46, 173.
- Ludlow, General, Memoirs of Cromwell, xiv. 19; Cromwell's remark to, 287; notes Cromwell's ill-success, 334; at trial of Charles I., xv. 105; of Council of State, 111; Deputy of Ireland, 296; Cromwell's conversation with, xvi. 7; and Cromwell, scene with, 204; Republican, lives in Essex, xvii. 176; xviii. 168.
- Ludwig Eugen, Prince, of Würtemberg, xxv. 143, 147.
- Ludwig IV., Bavarian Kaiser, xxi. 154, 197.
- Ludwig, Bavarian Kurfürst of Brandenburg, xxi. 163; marries Margaret *Maultasche*, 167; will not be turned out, 174; retires to Bavaria and the Tyrol, 175.
- Ludwig, King of Bavaria, xxx. 148.
- Ludwig, Kanzler von, xxiii. 68.
- Ludwig, Kurfürst, the Roman, xxi. 175.
- Ludwig *Ohne Haut*, the last King of Hungary, xxi. 240, 290.
- Ludwig Rudolf, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, xxiii. 89.
- Ludwig, Prince of Brunswick, xxvi. 104; wounded at Sohr, 132; mentioned also, xxviii. 355.
- Ludwigsburg, xxii. 430.
- Luisclius, of the One Razor, xxiii. 355.
- Luise, Princess of Orange, xxi. 56.
- Lumsden, Col., killed at Dunbar, xvi. 52.
- Lunéville, Inspector Malseigne at, iii. 111.
- Lunsford, Col., described, xiv. 122.
- Lusinsky, General, with Stolberg, at Torgau, xxviii. 253.
- Luther's birth and parentage, xii. 151; hardships and rigorous necessity; death of Alexis; becomes monk, 152; his religious despair; finds a Bible; deliverance from darkness, 153; Rome, Tetzl, 156, burns the Pope's

- Bull, 157; at the Diet of Worms, 158, King of the Reformation, 163; 'Duke Georges nine days running,' 165; his little daughter's deathbed; his solitary Patmos, 166, his Portrait, 167, his prose a half-battle, viii. 61; love of music and poetry, 79, before the Diet of Worms, 81; his Psalm, 81; his Life the latest prophecy of the Eternal, xi. 270; xx. 125, 226, 238, 280; xxii. 410; visited by Markgraf George, xxi. 244, by Hochmeister Albert, 256; opinion of the Teutsch Ritters, 257; visited by Elizabeth of Brandenburg, 280; his Bible, 398; Hymn, 406; at Coburg during the Diet of Augsburg, xxii. 414; and Friedrich the Great in essential agreement, xxviii. 337: mentioned also, xxix. 152.
- Lutternberg, Fight of, xxviii. 124 n.
- Lützen, xxii. 411.
- Lützow, cited, xxvi. 78 n.
- Lux, Adam, on death of Charlotte Corday, iv. 214; guillotined, 259.
- Luxembourg, forges at, iv. 238; Palace, a prison, 266.
- Luxemburg Kaisers, xxi. 150, 153.
- Lydeot, Col., at Inverkeithing fight, xvi. 157.
- Lynar, Count, xxiv. 284; Convention of Kloster-Zeven, xxvii. 282, 284: mentioned also, xxx. 11.
- Lynch law, xxx. 53.
- Lyons, Federation at, iii. 56; disorders in, iv. 158; Chalier, Jacobin, executed at, 215; bombarded, powder tower of, 234; captured, 269, massacres at, 271.
- Lyttelton, George (first lord), in Lorraine, xxii. 256; at Soissons during the Congress, 259; in the Ministry, 262; in Opposition, xxiii. 237; xxv. 376.
- Lyttleton, Lord, his running off with Great Seal, xvi. 129.
- MAASEYK, General Borek occupies, xxiv. 111.
- Macchiavel, xxiii. 381; his opinion of Democracy, xi. 309.
- Mace, of the Commons, the, a bauble, xvi. 224.
- Machinery, age of, vii. 317; ix. 286; supernatural, 10, exporting, xiii. 228. See Mechanical.
- Mackenzie, James, xxv. 370.
- Mackenzie, Sir George, xxv. 370.
- Mackworth, Col., in Council of State, xvii. 8 n.; account of, 194 n.
- Macmahon, Father, xxvi. 356.
- Macnamara, Mr., xxx. 124.
- Macpherson, vii. 30.
- Madeira, its beautiful climate and scenery, xx. 179, 184.
- Madras, Lally's siege of, xxviii. 312.
- Magdeburg, xxi. 142, 249, 342, 348, 362, 416; xxii. 48; camp of, xxvi. 51. See Christian Wilhelm of.
- Magi, Oriental, books of the, ix. 314.
- Magna Charta, i. 260; x. 391.
- Magnetic vellum, the, iii. 50; Mountains, the, pulling, xxii. 86.
- Maguire, at Reichenberg, xxvii. 147, 149, 256; xxviii. 332; besieges Pirna, 84; chased by Prince Henri, 153; reenters Saxony, 256; Siege of Dresden, 261; successful negotiations, 262, 263, broken pledges, 270; besieged in Dresden by Friedrich, xxix. 27-34; at Freyberg, 323.
- Mahlzahn, Prussian Minister, xxvi. 445; xxvii. 6, 7, 64.
- Mahomet, xi. 118; xiii. 354; his birth, boyhood, and youth, xii. 61; marries Kadjah, 64; quiet, unambitious life, 65, divine commission, 66, the good Kadjah believes him; Seid; young Ali, 69; offences, and sore struggles, 70; flight from Mecca; being driven to take the sword, he uses it, 71; the Koran, 76; a veritable Hero, 84; Seid's death, 84; freedom from Cant, 85; the infinite nature of duty, 88; his Koran, xxvii. 298.
- Maid of Orleans, Schiller's, v. 181; scenes, showing Joanna, Talbot, Lionel and others, 188.
- Maids, old and young, Richter's appeal to, viii. 67.
- Madston, John, on Cromwell, xiv. 19; xv. 90.
- Maidstone fight, xv. 10.
- Mailath, cited, xxiv. 143 n.; xxv. 81 n.
- Mailhe, Deputy, on trial of Louis, iv. 107.

- Maillard, Usher, at siege of Bastille, ii. 238, 240; Insurrection of Women, drum, Champs Elysées, 317, 318; entering Versailles, 324; addresses National Assembly there, 326; signs Déchéance petition, iii. 237; in September Massacres, iv. 37.
- Maille, Camp-Marshal, at Tulleries, iii. 355, 357; massacred at La Force, iv. 47.
- Maillebois, Marshal, xxiii. 209; marches to relief of Prag, xxv. 239; small reverence for the Kaiser, 240; in the Middle Rhine Countries, xxvi. 14, 18, 38, sent to Italy, 39, 199; at Sceaux, 209, 211: mentioned also, xxv. 64, 67, 82, 105, 222, 238, 244; xxvi. 137.
- Mailly, Marshal, one of Four Generals (1790), iii. 88.
- Maily Sisters, the, xxiv. 252.
- Maine, Zachary, notice of, xviii. 255.
- Maine, Duc du, xxvi. 207.
- Maine, Duchesse du, xxvi. 207.
- Mainwaring censured, xiv. 65.
- Mainz, Archbishops of, xxi. 123, 135, 152. See Albert, Archbishop of.
- Mainz, Kur-, Chairman of the Reichs Diet, xxvii. 137; admonished by General Oldenburg, 191.
- Major-Generals, the, xvii. 131, 227-229, 240; list of, 155 n.; abolished, 255, 277.
- Majorities, blockhead, xix. 300, 323.
- Malesherbes, M. de, in King's Council, ii. 109; remark by, 116; defends Louis, iv. 120, 131; Louis returns money to, 136; guillotined, 325.
- Maleverer, Col., Cromwell's letter in behalf of his Family, xviii. 242.
- Malevner, Lord, Royalist, xvii. 129.
- Malmesbury, Earl of, xxviii. 20.
- Malosa, M., at Strasburg, xxiv. 75.
- Malplaquet, battle of, xxi. 31; bloodiest of obstinate fights, xxi. 377.
- Malseigne, Army Inspector, at Nanci, iii. 108-111; imprisoned, 113; liberated, 117.
- Malthus's over-population panic, i. 219.
- Malthusian controversies, x. 419.
- Malton, Lord, xxvi. 264, 266.
- Malzahn, Fraulein von, afterwards Madame Münnich, xxiv. 258.
- Mammon, not a god at all, xiii. 85; Gospel of Mammonism, 181, 236; Working Mammonism better than Idle Dilettantism, 183, 188, 257; getting itself strangled, 228; fall of Mammon, 334, 362; Mammon like Fire, 355. See Economics.
- Man by nature *naked*, i. 4, 54, 60; essentially a tool-using animal, 39; the true Shekinah, 64, a divine emblem, 70, 211, 213, 232, 256; two men alone honourable, 220; his rights and might, ii. 272, 281, iii. 282, the clearest symbol of the Divinity, ix. 115; the *life* of every man a poem and revelation of Infinity, 311; x. 7; the Missionary of Order, xiii. 114, 285; sacredness of the human Body, 155; a born Soldier, 238; a God-created Soul, 285. See Good, Great, Microcosm, Original, Thinking Man.
- Manasseh Ben Israel, learned Jew, xvii. 175.
- Manchester, its squalor and despair not forever inseparable from it, x. 397; once organic, a blessing instead of an affliction, 418, Insurrection at, xiii. 19, its poor operatives, 22, 62; in the twelfth century, 83; built on the infinite Abysses, 283.
- Manchester, Earl, Sergeant Major of Associated Counties, xiv. 168; and Gen. Crawford, 186, 189, to reform Cambridge University, 186; quarrels with Cromwell, 202, 204; one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Mandat, Commander of Guards (August 1792), iii. 355; death of, 361.
- Mandevil, Lord, dispute with Cromwell, xiv. 113. See Manchester, Earl.
- Manège, Salle de, Constituent Assembly occupies, iii. 10.
- Manhood, vii. 45; suffrage, xi. 342.
- Mann, Sir Horace, xxix. 145.
- Mannheim, Karl Philip removes his Court to, xxii. 49.
- Manning, Mr., spy, xvii. 131, 220.
- Manning, Mrs., 'dying game,' xix. 78.
- Mannstein, General, arrests Bieren, xxiv. 257; in Prussian service, xxvi. 237; at Potsdam, 352; at Battle of Prag, xxvii. 171, 180; rash mistake

- at Kolin, 221, 222; death, 238: cited, xxii. 9 n.; xxiv. 257.
- Mansion-House, the, xxiii. 403.
- Manteufel, xxiii. 233.
- Manteufel, General, in Pommern, xxviii. 12; battle of Zorndorf, 69; Zulli-chau, 176, 177.
- Manton, Mr., preaches at Installation, xviii. 85.
- Mannel, Jacobin, slow-sure, iii. 299; in August Tenth, 362; in Govern-ing Committee, iv. 12; haranguing at La Force, 46; in National Con-vention, 63; dubs D'Orléans, 65; motions in National Convention, 74; vote at King's trial, 129; in prison, 241; guillotined, 265.
- Marat, Jean Paul, horseleech to D'Ar-tois, ii. 60; notice of, 170; against violence, 216; at siege of Bastille, 239; summoned by Constituent, not to be gagged, 291; astir, 310; how to regenerate France, iii. 21, 134; police and, 33; on abolition of titles, 65; would gibbet Mirabeau, 134; bust in Jacobins, 302; concealed in cellars, 347; pulls tocsin rope, 358; in seat of honour, iv. 12, 34; signs circular, 57; elected to Convention, 63; and Dumouriez, 81; oaths by, in Convention, 91; first appearance in Convention, pistol, 94, against Roland, 125; on sufferings of Peo-ple, 149; and Girondins, 160; ar-ested, 187; returns in triumph, 190; fall of Girondins, 201; sick, his re-sidence, 209; and Charlotte Corday, 210; honours to, 211, 373; Com-pany of, iv. 267.
- Marburg and its Teutsch Ritters, xxi. 125; Wolf finds shelter at, xxii. 181.
- Mardike taken, xviii. 95.
- Maréchal, Atheist, Calendar by, iv. 229.
- Maréchale, the lady, on nobility, ii. 14.
- Margaret *Maultasche*, xxi. 167.
- Marheineke, cited, xxi. 246 n.
- Maria Anna, Archduchess, Prince Karl's Wife, xxv. 388, 393; her death, xxvi. 9.
- Maria Eleonora, Wife of Albert Fried-rich of Prussen, xxi. 302, 306, 309.
- Maria Stuart*, Schiller's tragedy of, v. 179.
- Maria Theresa, xxi. 16; xxii. 107, 123, 259; xxiii. 13; rumour of marriage with Friedrich, xxii. 387; xxiii. 87; to marry Duke of Lorraine, 102; at her Father's death, xxiv. 140; pro-claimed Archduchess and Queen, 142; refuses Friedrich's Proposals, 203; she gets money from England, 281; xxv. 5; her indignant protest against Friedrich, xxiv. 351; against Kur-Sachsen, 364; Coronation, xxv. 31; a brave young Queen, 38; driven to despair, 69; at Presburg, 77; "Moriatur," mythical and actual, 78; one stroke more for Silesia, 165; sorrowful surrender, 193; a true Sovereign Ruler, 261; Queen of Bohemia, 274; triumphant demands, 300, 306, 308; clutches Bavaria with uncommon tightness, 307; extraor-dinary Response to King Louis's Declaration, 308; high conduct to-wards the Reich, 312; Treaty of Worms, 339, 391; her indignation against Friedrich, and undaunted resolution, 399; again appeals to Hungary, 399; will have the Bohe-mian campaign finished, 432; very high exultation and hope, xxvi. 3, 4; Silesian Manifesto, 4; a face-to-face glimpse; interview with Robinson, 112; at her Husband's Coronation, 117; will as soon part with her pet-ticoat as with Silesia; her opinion of Friedrich, 118; urges Prince Karl to fight Friedrich, 118; a third and fiercer trial this Winter, 141, con-sents to peace, 176; goes into the Italian War, 199; protests against the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 226, 227; high opinion of Kaunitz, 422; xxvii. 18; flattering little Notes to the Pompadour, xxvi. 423; xxvii. 18; still hopes to reconquer Silesia, 4; secret Treaty with Russia and Saxony, 10, 12; tries to deny it, 17; refuses to aid in defence of Hanover, 22; joins with France, 31, 33; gives audience to Klinggräf, 51; bent on relieving Saxony, 77, 97; flings open her Im-perial studs, 78, courage in misfor-

- tune, 186; new order of Knighthood in honour of Kolin, 280; dispatches Kaunitz to urge on Prince Karl, 271; hears of Leuthen, 405; thought to be disposed for peace, xxviii. 6; substantial reasons for war, 130, 132; anti-Protestantism, 337; urges Russia to attack Silesia, 384; welcomes Daun back to Vienna, xxix. 133, signs peace-proposals, 171, piqued at Loudon's secrecy about Schweidnitz, 222; consents to a separate peace between France and England, 240; horror at Czar Peter's peace with Friedrich, 266; prayers and tears, 270; grief at her husband's death; takes her son Joseph as Coadjutor, 397; enmity to the Czarina, xxx. 35, 43; indignant letter to Kaunitz on the Partition of Poland, 48; writes to Friedrich, 164; her beautiful death, 206. mentioned also, xxv. 391; xxx. 22, 33, 133, 172.
- Marie-Antoine, Electress of Saxony, a bright lady, among the busiest in the world, xxix. 405; left with the guardianship of her son, 406; correspondence with King Friedrich about the crown of Poland, 407-413; visits him at Berlin, xxx. 11; their pleasant correspondence, 11-13; interest in the Bavarian-Succession question, 149: mentioned also, 109, 134, 136.
- Marie-Antoinette, x. 18, 31, 47, 75; writes to her Sister, xxx. 257. See Antoinette.
- Marienburg, xxi. 119, 162.
- Marischal College, Aberdeen, xxviii. 377.
- Marischal, Lord, xxvi. 221, 345; sorrow for his brother's death, xxviii. 112; an excellent cheery old soul, honest as the sunlight, 113; sympathising letter from Friedrich, 126; visited by Maupertuis, 340; goes to Spain on diplomatic mission, 375-378; calls at London on his way to look after the Earldom of Kintore, 377; important Spanish notices to Pitt, 378; a good deal in England, xxix. 209; Cottage-villa near Sans-Souci; later epochs of his life, 391-394; entertains Conway and Keith, xxx. 107-113; letter to Keith, 111: mentioned also, 124, 154 n
- Markgrafs, origin of, xxi. 75.
- Marlborough, and the History of England, xi. 367; his dextrous management, xxi. 380; how the English treated him, 381; xxi. 100; his last days, 426: mentioned also, xxi. 31, 62, 319, 377, 405; xxv. 222, 240; xxvii. 374.
- Marlborough, Duchess of, xxiv. 281; xxv. 223; xxvii. 201.
- Marlborough, Duke of, at Koesfeld, xxviii. 123 n.
- Marquart, Captain, noticed by Friedrich, xxviii. 298.
- Marriage, strange state of law of, in Germany, vi. 150; covenant, ix. 294; by the month, xi. 193; contracts, xiii. 342, 344.
- Mars, Champ de. See Champ
- Marschowitz, Prince Karl's Camp at, xxv. 428.
- Marseilles, Brigands at, ii. 210; on Déchéance, the bar of iron, iii. 235 (see Barbaroux, Rebecqui); for Girondism, iv. 189, 206, 216, guillotine at, 268.
- Marseillaise, March and Hymn of, iii. 336, 338, iv. 14, 106, at Charenton, 349; at Paris, 349; Filles-St.-Thomas and, 350; barracks, 352; August Tenth, 360, 367-371.
- Marston Moor. See Battle.
- Marten, Henry, M.P., of Council of State, xv. 111; character of, xvi. 194; a lewd liver, 224; his thoughts in Chepstow Castle, xix. 302.
- Martial Law the unseen basis of all laws whatever, xi. 351.
- Martin, General San, and his march over the Andes, xi. 72.
- Martin, Commodore, xxv. 235; xxviii. 378.
- Martyn, Sir Thomas, of Cambridge Committee, xiv. 134.
- Marwitz, Adjutant, at Hochkirch, xxviii. 91.
- Marwitz's, General, recollections of King Friedrich, xxx. 229-236.
- Marwitz, xxiv. 63; xxv. 137, 169; his death, xxvi. 9.

- Marwitz, Demoiselle, xxiii. 255; xxiv. 63; xxv. 137; xxvi. 9.
- Mary, Queen, and Knox, xii. 175.
- Mary, Princess, xxv. 277.
- Maryland and Virginia, differences between, xvii. 85; Cromwell's letter to Commissioners of, 153.
- Masham Family, notice of, xiv. 100.
- Masham, Sir William, in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 22.
- Mass, Cromwell on the, xv. 251.
- Massacre, Avignon, iii. 267; September, iv. 36-54; number slain in, 54; corpse's hand, 55; compared to Bartholomew, 56, Convention on, 92. See Orléans, Nantes, Lyons.
- Massey, Gen., how to be employed, xiv. 263; forces disbanded, 266; character of, 266; enlists soldiers, 297; purged by Pride, xv. 103; with Scots, xvi. 155; wounded at Worcester, 174.
- Masson, Minister von, xxix. 373.
- Master, eye of the, xiii. 114.
- Mastership and servanthship the only delivery from Tyranny and Slavery, xi. 187, 192, 205.
- Mathews, Col., delinquent, xv. 88, 90.
- Matilda, Queen of Denmark, rescued by Keith, xxx. 109.
- Matinées du Roi de Prusse*, an impudent pamphlet of forgeries, xxi. 209; the author identified, xxviii. 350-55.
- Maton, Advocate, his 'Resurrection' (September), iv. 43.
- Matthews, Admiral, xxv. 235.
- Mauconseil, section, on forfeiture of King, iii. 352; on Girondins, iv. 172.
- Maud, Empress, xxi. 92.
- Mauduit, Dissenter, and his pamphlet on the German War, xxix. 144-149.
- Maultasche, Margaret, xxi. 167.
- Maupeou, under Louis XV., ii. 2, 3; and Dame Dubarry, 3.
- Maupertuis, M. de, xxiii. 360, xxiv. 93, 209; his Portrait; invitation from Friedrich, 16, arrives at Wesel, 78; quarrel with Madame du Châtelet, 78; taken prisoner at Mollwitz, 333; Letter from Voltaire, xxv. 334; Perpetual President of the Berlin Academy, 349; quarrels with König
- for questioning his metaphysics, xxvi. 282-287; cannot help Voltaire 'in a bad business,' 291, 304; jealous of his favour with the King, 338; Voltaire's opinion of him, 353; flattered by La Beaumelle, 358, indignant correspondence with König, 380, 381; appeals to the Berlin Academy, 382-386; mercilessly quizzed by Voltaire; Dr. Akakia, 387-392; threatens him, and gets his reply, 400; his final pilgrimings, sicknesses and death, xxviii. 338-340; his character defended by Friedrich, 373-375.
- Maurepas, Prime Minister, character of, ii. 38; government of, 49, against Voltaire, xxv. 318; death of, ii. 78.
- Maurice, Prince, quits England, xiv. 255; drowned, xv. 212.
- Maurice, Rev. F. D., a Cambridge companion of Sterling's, xx. 42; joins him in the Athenæum adventure, 52, 55; divergence of opinion, but kindly trustful union of hearts, 157, 310, 319; marries Sterling's sister-in-law, 174.
- Maurice's, Mrs., affectionate solicitude for Sterling and his orphan family, xx. 304, 310, 319.
- Maurice, Count, xxii. 229.
- Maury, Abbé, character of, ii. 182; in Constituent Assembly, 273; seized emigrating, 355; dogmatic, iii. 10, 20; efforts fruitless, 142; made Cardinal, 251; and D'Artois at Coblenz, 284.
- Mauvillon, Major (*Fils*), on the character of English soldiers, xxix. 206, 207; his Prussian statistics, 359; xxii. 366 n., xxvi. 104 n.; xxvii. 262 n., 285; xxix. 43 n.
- Mauvillon (*Père*), cited, xxi. 451 n.
- Max, Kaiser, xxi. 225, 236, 251.
- Max Joseph, Kurfurst of Baiern, death of, xxx. 136.
- Max Joseph, first King of Bavaria, xxx. 136.
- Maximilian I., xxv. 133, 134.
- Maximilian, Kurfurst of Baiern, xxv. 133, 134.
- Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, xxi. 318, 322, 328, 335, 337, 341, 351.

- Maxwell, James, and his indolent sardonic ways, xi. 219.
- Maxwell's Brigade at Warburg, xxix. 45.
- Mayer, Colonel, xxvii. 122; in Bohemia, 146; his exploits on the Reich, 187-192; order of knighthood from Wilhelmina, 191; with Friedrich in Saxony, 280-326; Rossbach, 336, 339, 345; with Prince Henri guarding Saxony, xxviii. 29, 84, 86; Dresden, 119; dies of fever; a man of considerable genius in the sleepless kind, 155.
- Mayer, cited, xxx. 132 n.
- Mayflower, sailing of the, x. 394; xii. 169.
- Maynard, Mr., one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Mayor, Richard, Esq., character of, xiv. 319; letters from Cromwell to, xv. 116, 119, 121, 125, 129, 131, 132, 134, 152, 154, 209, 291; xvi. 12, 60, 162; xvii. 12; in Little Parliament, xvi. 230; of Customs Committee, 268; in Council of State, 271 n.; xvii. 8 n.
- Mazarin, Giulio, Cardinal, policy of, xvii. 261; Cromwell's letters to, 263; xviii. 263, 265, 267; his opinion of Cromwell, 94.
- Mazis, Du, Engineer, xxvi. 57.
- Meagher, Chevalier, xxvii. 60, 61.
- Meat-jack, a disconsolate, xiii. 195.
- Mecca, xii. 60.
- Mechanical Philosophy, vi. 251; its inevitable Atheism, ix. 289. See Machinery.
- Mechanism disturbing labour, x. 352.
- Meckel's, Dr., great skill and kindness to Zimmermann, xxx. 68, 69.
- Mecklenburg, xxi. 98, 341, 448; compelled to contribute to Friedrich's war expenses, xxviii. 138; unparalleled Duke and Duchess of, xxii. 8, 382; xxiii. 56, xxvi. 249; the Duke's misgovernment and suspension, xxii. 272, 295; their Daughter, xxiii. 367, 405.
- Mecklenburg-Schwerin, xxix. 179 n.
- Mecklenburg-Strelitz, xxix. 179 n.
- Méda, Robespierre's death and, iv. 351 n.
- Medea-caldron, the, xi. 117.
- Medicine, profession of, xix. 228.
- Meditation, viii. 333. See Silence.
- Meer, fight of, xxviii. 123 n.
- Meg, Muckle, in Edinburgh Castle, xvi. 115 n.
- Meinecke, General, xxvii. 349.
- Meiningen, Dowager Duchess of, xxiii. 72.
- Meissen, Friedrich and Duke of Weissenfels at, xxv. 401.
- Melancthon, xxix. 152.
- Members, the Five, xiv. 123; the Eleven, 280; accused by Army, 295; list of, 295 n.; last appearance of, 297.
- Memmay, M., of Quincey, explosion of rustics, ii. 284.
- Memoirs, value of, if honest, ix. 224; x. 290, 293; xi. 37.
- Memory no wise without wise Oblivion, ix. 221; xi. 166; the strange alchemy of, 37, 62.
- Menads, the, ii. 312-316, 358.
- Menckenius, cited, xxi. 123 n.
- Mendacity, the fellest sort of, xxi. 412; xxii. 18; xxiv. 41; xxv. 23, 84. See Lie.
- Mendelsohn, author of *Phædon*, vi. 58.
- Menn, xxv. 383.
- Menou, General, arrested, iv. 395.
- Menou, Father, xxvi. 214.
- Mentz, occupied by French, iv. 82; siege of, 207, 370; surrender of, Goethe describes, 223.
- Mentzel, bloody, xxv. 82, 119, 141, 153, 313, 314; death of, 386.
- Mentzel's History, cited, xxi. 113 n.
- Menus, Hall of the, ii. 165.
- Menzel and the Saxon state-papers, xxvi. 444-447; xxvii. 6-9, 51, 64.
- Mephistopheles, xxii. 99.
- Meran, xxi. 128.
- Merchant Princes of Germany, viii. 258.
- Mercier on Paris revolting, ii. 211; Editor, 292; the September Massacre, iv. 54; in National Convention, 63; King's trial, 130, 131; dancing (in 1795), 364; workmen dining, 389.
- Mercifulness, true, ix. 97.
- Mercy, Graf von, xxiii. 211.

- Merit, Lord Palmerston's notion of, xi. 380; men of, xxiv. 28.
- Merlin of Thionville, in Mountain, iii. 257; irascible, 296; at Mentz, iv. 224.
- Merlin of Douai, Law of Suspect, iv. 239.
- Méropé*, triumphant success of the play, xxv. 265.
- Méry. See St. Méry.
- Mesmer, Dr., glance at, ii. 63.
- Mesmes, President de, xxvi. 208.
- Messina*, *Bride of*, Schiller's, v. 202.
- Metaphors the stuff of Language, i. 70.
- Metaphysics inexpressibly unproductive, i. 52, 58; the disease of, perennial, viii. 356; the forerunner of good, 372.
- Methodism, xiii. 76, 84, 146.
- Metra, the Newsman, iii. 37.
- Metropolis, importance of a, iv. 217.
- Mettrie, La, Army Surgeon, xxvi. 69; finds refuge with Friedrich, 341-3, 348; quizzes Voltaire, 352; his death, 355, 356.
- Metz, Boullé at, iii. 87; troops mutinous at, 98; siege of, xxi. 265; xxv. 285; Louis XV. falls ill at, 389.
- Meudon tannery, iv. 304.
- Meuselwitz, xxii. 411.
- Meyen, Kammer-Director, xxix. 366.
- Michael Angelo, house of, xx. 203.
- Michaelis, cited, xxi. 87 n.; xxvi. 238 n.; xxvii. 290 n.; xxix. 261 n.; xxx. 281, 283, 296.
- Michel, Herr, Secretary of Legation, xxvi. 423, 425.
- Microcosm, Man a, or epitomised mirror of the Universe, ix. 40, 233. See Man.
- Midas, xiii. 3, 9.
- Middle Ages, represented by Dante and Shakspeare, xii. 113, 115, 119.
- Middleton, Gen., at Preston fight, xv. 19; for Charles II., xvi. 91; Rebellion in Highlands, 185; xvii. 13.
- Might and Right, x. 330, 364, 388; meaning of, xiii. 238; their intrinsic identity, xx. 236. See Rights.
- Mignon, Goethe's exquisite delineation of, vi. 308.
- Milan, xxiii. 209.
- Mildmay, Sir Henry, quarrels with Lord Wharton, xv. 47.
- Miltair Lexikon*, xxi. 453 n.; xxix. 53 n.
- Military Instructions &c.* Friedrich's, xxv. 164 n.; xxviii. 385.
- Military tactics, modern, xxi. 403; military studies, xxiii. 117.
- Militia, Ordinance of, xiv. 125; new, 287.
- Millennium, French idea of, iv. 150; how to be preceded, xi. 347.
- Miller Arnold's case, xxx. 177-205; the Sans-Souci Miller, 201.
- Millocracy, our giant, xiii. 175.
- Mill's, John, friendship for Sterling, xx. 102, 114; introduces him to Carlyle, 130; has charge of the London and Westminster Review, 194; is with Sterling in Italy, 221; inserts his Article on *Carlyle*, 235; with Sterling at Falmouth, 246; his work on *Logic*, 284.
- Milton, John, i. 159; vii. 64; x. 277; his 'wages,' xii. 24; pamphlets by, xiv. 109; appointed Latin Secretary, xv. 124; Sir H. Vane, friend of, xvi. 194; blind, xvii. 7, 135; letter by, xviii. 150; his burial, entry of, xiv. 48; mute Miltons, x. 233.
- Milton State Papers criticised, xiv. 76; xvi. 262 n.
- Minden, xxii. 48; xxiii. 131; battle of, xxviii. 189-198.
- Ministers of Edinburgh and Cromwell, xvi. 65-80.
- Minnesänger*, Manesse's, xxi. 134, 142.
- Minnesingers. See Swabian Era.
- Minorities down to minority of one, xi. 185; xix. 296.
- Minuzzi, General, takes Passau, xxv. 41; mentioned also, 224, 269.
- Miomandre de Ste Marie, Bodyguard (October Fifth), ii. 346; left for dead, revives, 348; rewarded, iii. 151.
- Mirabeau, Marquis, on the state of France in 1775, ii. 42; and his son, 70; his death, 230.
- Mirabeau, Count, his pamphlets, ii. 87; the Notables, 89; Lettres-de-Cachet against, 89; expelled by the

Provence Noblesse, 155; cloth-shop, 156; is Deputy for Aix, 156; king of Frenchmen, 171; family of, 172; wanderings of, 173; his future course, 175; groaned at, in Assembly, 192; his newspaper suppressed, 195; silences Usher de Brézé, 205; at Bastille ruins, 258; on Robespierre, 274; fame of, 275; on French deficit, 299; populace on veto, 300; Mounier, October Fifth, 320; insight of, defends veto, iii. 11; courage, revenue of, 12; saleable? 13; and Danton, on Constitution, 26; his female bookseller, 35; at Jacobins, 39; his countship, 65; on state of Army, 97; Marat would gibbet, 134; his power in France, 140; on D'Orléans, 141; on duelling, 143; interview with Queen, 152; speech on emigrants (the 'trente voix'), 161; in Council, 167; his plans for France, 167; the probable career of, 169; sickens, yet works, 171, 172; last appearance in Assembly, 173; anxiety of populace for, 173; last sayings of, 174; death of, 174; public funeral of, 176; burial-place of, 177; character of, 178, 179; last of Mirabeaus, 181; bust in Jacobins, 302; bust demolished, iv. 114; his remains turned out of the Pantheon, 373; Memoirs of, x. 99-184; by far the best-gifted of all the notables of the French Revolution, 109; his Father, the tough choleric old Friend of Men, 116; the Mirabeaus from Florence, 117; a notable kindred, exempt from blockheads but liable to blackguards, 118; talent for choosing Wives, 120; gruff courtiership, 121; at the Battle of Casano, 123; of the whole strange kindred, no stranger figure than the Friend of Men, 125, his literary and other gifts and eccentricities, 126; his domestic difficulties, and Rhadamanthine struggles, 130; birth of Gabriel Honoré, last of the Mirabeaus, 133; education, the scientific paternal hand *versus* Nature and others, 135; sent to boarding-school, 138; banished to Saintes; fresh misdemean-

ours; *Lettre de Cachet*, and the Isle of Rhé, 141; fighting in Corsica, 143; the old Marquis's critical survey of his strange offspring, 144; the General Overturn, 147; the one man who might have saved France, 148; marriage, 151; banished to Manosque, 153; in the Castle of If, 155; a stolen visit from his Brother, 156; at Pontarlier, 158; Mirabeau and Sophie Monnier escape into Holland, 161; in the castle of Vincennes, 166; before the Besançon and Aix Parlements, 169; the world's esteem now quite against him, 172; States-General, his flinging-up of the handful of dust, 176; deputy for Aix, 178; victory and death, 179; and Friedrich, xxi. 4, 8, 15; his Grandfather, 405; *Monarchie Prussienne*, and advocacy of Free-Trade, xxvi. 326; xxix. 358, 370; sees Friedrich, xxx. 256; carries news of his death, 270: cited, xxi. 4 n.; xxv. 210 n.; xxx. 265; mentioned also, 236, 248.

Mirabeau, M. de, uncle of the above, xxvii. 250, 282.

Mirabeau the younger, nicknamed Tonneau, ii. 181; in Constituent Assembly, breaks his sword, 208, 273; death of, iii. 181.

Miracles, significance of, i. 247, 254; the age of, now and ever, viii. 375.

Miranda, General, attempts Holland, iv. 165.

Mirepoix, Bishop of (l'Ane de), xxiii. 315; xxv. 318.

Miroménil, Keeper of Seals, ii. 92.

Mirow, Carl Ludwig Friedrich, Prince of, xxiii. 335, 341.

Misery not so much the cause as the effect of Immorality, ix. 338; all, the fruit of unwisdom, xiii. 34; strength that has not yet found its way, 357. See Wretchedness.

Misnia, xxi. 74, 76.

Mist's Journal, cited, xxii. 252 n.

Mistvoï, King of Wends, xxi. 87, 88.

Mitbelehrung of Preussen, xxi. 288.

Mitchell, Col., Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 262.

Mitchell, Sir Andrew, xxvii. 46, 119;

- in consultation with Friedrich, 57, 58; urges Friedrich's cause, 136; personal intimacy and mutual esteem, 241, 242, 325; xxvii. 392; quizzes Gottsched, xxvii. 317; at Breslau, xxviii. 4; subsidy treaty, 14; burning of Dresden suburbs, 119; his account of Friedrich's marches, xxix. 11, 12, 17, 56; at siege of Dresden, 28, 29, 31; at Seichau; burns all his papers, 60; battle of Liegnitz, 66, 71; with Friedrich at Leipzig, 149; his respect for Gellert, 153, 154; stroke of apoplexy on hearing of the English defection, 332; his death, 396: cited, xxvii. 185 n.; xxix. 10 n.; mentioned also, xxx. 110.
- Mitschepfal, Lieutenant, at Grotkau, xxiv. 304; his daughter's gratitude to Friedrich, xxx. 291.
- Mitton, Col., in Wales, xiv. 301.
- Mobs, on, ii. 312.
- Mockranowski, proposes Prince Henri as King of Poland, xxix. 425; sent to look after Bar, 439.
- Mocu, Rittmeister de, in Sangerhausen, xxvii. 259.
- Moczinska, Princess, xxvii. 62.
- Model, new, of the Army, xiv. 201, 206 n., 218, 221, 226; Prisons, xix. 59-103; London Prison of the model kind, 63.
- Moderation, and other fine names, viii. 96. See Half-and-halfness.
- Moffat, the African Missionary, xx. 286.
- Mohacz, battle of, xxi. 240.
- Moleville, Bertrand de, Historian, ii. 129; iii. 275; Minister, his plan, 277; frivolous policy of, 278; and D'Orléans, 278; jesuitic, 298; in despair, 353; concealed, iv. 14.
- Mollendorf, carries news of the victory of Sohr, xxvi. 137; leads an attack at Leuthen, xxvii. 395; at Hochkirch, xxviii. 106, 108, at Liegnitz, xxix. 69; turns the tide of battle in Friedrich's favour at Torgau, 127, 128; at Burkersdorf, 296-303: cited, 250 n.
- Mollwitz, battle of, xxiv. 307, 339; a signal-shot among the Nations, 338, &c. 2.
- Moloch, our modern, xix. 255.
- Momoro, bookseller, agrarian, iv. 11; arrested, 310; guillotined, 314; his Wife, Goddess of Reason, 284.
- Monarchy, Fifth, described, xvii. 33; plot, 297.
- Money, doomed to possess, xix. 248.
- Monge, Mathematician, in office, iii. 375; assists in new Calendar, iv. 229.
- Moniteur, Editors of the, ii. 170, 292; iii. 35.
- Monk, Col. George, in the Tower, xiv. 191; in Ireland, 304; in Scots War, xvi. 11, 41, 50; at Edinburgh, 111; made Lieut.-General of Ordnance, 147; sent to Stirling, 166; storms Dundee, 184; puts down rebellion in the Highlands, 185; xvii. 13; in Dutch War, xvi. 207, 220; Army mutinous, xvii. 87.
- Monks, ancient and modern, xiii. 55; the old ones not without secularity, 76, 84; insurrection of, 125.
- Monmouth-street, and its "On' clo'" Angels of Doom, i. 233.
- Monopoly of soap, &c., xiv. 68.
- Monro, Gen., in Scots Army, xv. 15; his motions, 44; rejected at Edinburgh, 53.
- Monsabert, G. de, President of Paris Parlement, ii. 122; arrested, 125-128.
- Montagu, Dr., censured, xiv. 65.
- Montague family, xiv. 57.
- Montague, Lord, a Puritan, xiv. 54.
- Montague (Earl of Sandwich), Colonel of the Parliament foot, xiv. 217; at Bristol siege, 234, 236; receives King at Hinchinbrook, 288; in Little Parliament, xvi. 230; of Customs Committee, 268; in Council of State, 271 n.; xvii. 8 n.; in Cromwell's First Parliament, 23; made Admiral, 161; Cromwell's letters to, 181, 184, 199; xviii. 86, 88, 95; on Committee of Kingship, xvii. 288; assists the French, xviii. 34, 86, 89, at Installation, 85; is one of Cromwell's Lords, 101.
- Montaigne's House, xx. 168; Sterling's Essay, 194.
- Montalembert, urges Sweden and Rus-

- sia against Friedrich, xxviii. 56, 177, 179, 246, 285, 298, 300, 388; xxix. 49, 59; takes credit to himself for the Lacy vulture-swoop on Berlin, 99, 101: cited, xxviii. 11 n.; xxix. 99 n.
- Montazet at Leuthen, xxvii. 389; watching and messaging about, xxviii. 177, 179.
- Montbail, Dame de, xxi. 38, 393.
- Montcalm, Marquis de, Commander of Quebec, xxviii. 198, 309; defeated by Wolfe, 304, letter to a cousin in France (spurious), particulars of his own defeat and death, and the coming revolt of America, 306-308.
- Montecuculi, M. de, xxx. 23.
- Montélimart, covenant sworn at, iii. 54.
- Montemar, Duke of, xxiii. 210.
- Montenaro, Duke of, son-in-law of Madame du Châtelet, xxv. 264.
- Montespan, Madame de, xxvi. 207 n.
- Montesquieu, xxii. 337; xxiii. 301; xxvi. 185.
- Montesquieu, General, takes Savoy, iv. 82.
- Montgaillard, on Queen captive, iii. 375; on September Massacres, iv. 53; on Paris ladies, 365.
- Montgolfier, invents balloons, ii. 62.
- Montgomery, Col. Robert, notice of, xv. 76; Major-General in Scots Army, xvi. 17, 19, 99 n., 126.
- Montholien, xxii. 475.
- Montholon, cited, xxvii. 347 n.; xxix. 186 n.
- Montijos, Excellency, xxiv. 357; his sumptuosities, xxv. 16.
- Montmartre, trenches at, iv. 15.
- Montmorency, xxiv. 360.
- Montmorin, War-Secretary, ii. 111; his Brother killed at La Force, iv. 39.
- Montrose, the Hero-Cavalier, xii. 270; in Scots Army, xiv. 105; routed in Scotland, 253; taken and executed, xvi. 6.
- Moonshine, bottled, and belief in an incredible Church, xx. 111; diseased developments, 117; more perilous than any perdition, 130.
- Moor, Mr., death of, at Carthagena, xxiv. 397.
- Moore, Doctor, at attack of Tuileries, iii. 369; at La Force, iv. 39; xxi. 5.
- Moral Sense, the, a perennial miracle, xi. 369.
- Morahty, xiii. 203.
- Morande, De, newspaper by, ii. 69; will return, 169; in prison, iv. 22.
- Moravian foray, xxv. 148-164.
- Moray House, Edinburgh, Cromwell at, xv. 72.
- Mordington, Cromwell at, xv. 63, 66; xvi. 13; incident at, 14.
- More's, Hannah, anti-German trumpet-blast, viii. 284.
- Morellet, Philosophe, ii. 291.
- Morgan, Mr., to be taken, xv. 7, 8.
- Moritz, Elector, his superior jockeyship, xi. 276.
- Moritz of Saxony, xxi. 263, 267, 283, 286; xxii. 378.
- Moritz of Dessau, at Kesselsdorf, xxvi. 165, 167; in Saxony, xxvii. 59, 112; at Eger, on march for Prag, 145; ill-luck at Prag, 174; with the King to meet Daun, 212; scene with the King* at battle of Kolin, 223, 224; charge of the retreat, 228, 237; recalled, 239; in the Pirna country, 269, 280, Torgau, 295, 315; Leuthen, 391; Feldmarschall; thanks from the King, 398; badly wounded at Hochkirch, xxviii. 105: mentioned also, xxvi. 167 n.; xxvii. 43.
- Moritz. See Comte de Saxe.
- Morris, Governor of Pontefract Castle, xv. 82, Cromwell's letter to, 82.
- Morrison's Pill, xiii. 29; men's 'Religion' a kind of, 282.
- Mors, xxii. 456.
- Mortaigne, xxviii. 11 n.
- Mosel, Colonel, has charge of convoy to Olmütz, xxviii. 36; cleverest precautions and dispositions, 39; convoy attacked and ruined, 40, 41; made prisoner at Maxen, 325.
- Mosel, General, xxii. 462.
- Moses, the Hebrew outlaw, vii. 167; and the Dwellers by the Dead Sea, xiii. 190.
- Mosheim, xxiii. 186: cited, 188 n.
- Mosstroopers, Watt and Augustin, xvi. 95; routed by Col Hacker, 117.
- Mother's, a, religious influence, i. 99.

- Motive-Millwrights, i. 213.
- Moucheton, M. de, of King's Body-guard, ii. 333.
- Moudon, Abbé, confessor to Louis XV., ii. 19, 26.
- Mounier, at Grenoble, ii. 130; proposes Tennis-Court oath, 202; October Fifth, President of Constituent Assembly, 320; deputed to King, 326; dilemma of, on return, 338; emigrates, 355.
- Mountain scenery, i. 147.
- Mountain, members of the, iii. 257; reelected in National Convention, iv. 63; Gironde and, 151-156; favours of the, 154; vulnerable points of, 160, prevails, 164; Danton, Duperret, 186, after Gironde dispersed, 206; in labour, 216.
- Moyland, little Schloss of, and Voltaire's First Interview, xxiv. 90.
- Mühlberg, Camp of, xxii. 335, 376.
- Muhldorf, fight of, xxi. 154.
- Mulgrave, Earl, xv. 49; in Council of State, xvii. 8 n.; one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Müller, General, invades Spain, iv. 294.
- Muller, Friedrich, vi. 181.
- Müller, Chaplain, and Lieut. Katte, xxii. 487; waits on the Crown-Prince, xxiii. 3, 9.
- Müller, on Rossbach, xxvii. 327 n.
- Müller, Johann von, cited, xxviii. 365; xxx. 229.
- Müller, Jungfer, killed in Breslau, xxix. 51 n.
- Müller, Lieutenant, cited, xxviii. 87 n.
- Mullner, Dr., supreme over all playwrights, vii. 143; his Newspaper qualifications, 157.
- München and its Kaiser, xxv. 420.
- Munchhausen, Baron, xxiv. 7; xxvi. 20.
- Munchow, President, xxii. 483.
- Munchows, the, xxiv. 24, 61, 63, 279.
- Mungo Park, xii. 262.
- Municipality of Paris, to be abolished, iv. 360. See Paris.
- Münlich, General, xxiii. 204, 238, 239, 270, 348, 371; xxiv. 156; arrests Duke Bieren, 257; is supreme in Russia, 259; withdraws from Court, 260; sent to Siberia, 263; at Oczakow, xxviii. 56, 65; Münnich and Bieren refuse to be reconciled, xxix. 275; would undertake to save Czar Peter, 284; his praises of Catharine, 287.
- Munster for Parliament, xv. 228.
- Murat, in Vendémiaire revolt, iv. 395.
- Musaus, Johann August, his life and writings, vi. 316; his *Volksmährchen*, 320; moral and intellectual character, 321.
- Music, Luther's love of, viii. 79; divinest of all the utterances allowed to man, xi. 231; condemned to madness, 237.
- Musical, all deep things, xii. 99; Entertainment at Cromwell's, xvii. 274.
- Musselburgh, Cromwell at, xvi. 16, 24, 32; Cromwell's Army in, 147.
- Mutiny, military, nature of, iii. 90.
- Muy, du, Chevalier, at Warburg, xxix. 44, 45.
- Mylius, xxii. 486: cited, xxvi. 255.
- Mystery, all-pervading domain of, i. 67; deep significance of, viii. 346; mystical and intellectual enjoyment of an object, ix. 261, 389.
- Mysticism, vi. 82; vii. 272, 309.
- Mythologies, the old, once Philosophies, ix. 9. See Pan, Sphinx.
- Nachod, xxiii. 153.
- Nadasti, in Prince Karl's Rhine Campaign, xxv. 387; attacks Tabor, 425; with Prince Karl in Silesia, xxvi. 75, 78; Hohenfriedberg, 87; back into Bohemia, 98, 100; Sohr, 129, 133; on march with Prince Karl to Brandenburg, 142; with Daun at Kohn, xxvii. 219; follows the Prince of Prussia, 255; surprised at Ostritz, 268; attacks Winterfeld at Jakelsberg, 272; besieges Schweidnitz, 366; at Leuthen, 389; receives the Prussian attack, 391; in a bad way, 392; skilfully covers the retreat, 392: mentioned also, xxx. 222.
- Nadir Shah, xxiii. 403; xxvi. 265.
- Nahorzan, Camp of, xxvi. 104.
- Naigeon's Life of Diderot, ix. 235.
- Nakedness and hypocritical Clothing,

- i. 54, 62; a naked Court-ceremonial, 59; a naked Duke, addressing a naked House of Lords, 60.
- Names, significance and influence of, i. 87, 251; inextricable confusion of Saxon princely, xi. 268; Mirabeau's expressive Nicknames, x. 175.
- Namslau, Prussian siege of, xxiv. 226, 228.
- Nanci, revolt at, iii. 17, 104, 107, 110; town described, 104; deputation imprisoned, 108; deputation of mutineers, 115; state of mutineers in, 115, 117; Bonillé's fight, 118; Paris thereupon, 120; military executions at, 122; Assembly Commissioners, 123.
- Nanke, cited, xxi. 218n.
- Nantes, after King's flight, iii. 207; massacres at, iv. 267; noyades, 275; prisoners to Paris, 338, 359; Edict of, xxi. 360, 394, 397.
- Napier, General Sir Charles, xxviii. 386 n.
- Naples, Sterling at, xx. 279; eminent ignorance of the Neapolitans, 281; in the wind for Carlos, xxiii. 209.
- Napoleon, and his Political Evangel, i. 172; studying mathematics, ii. 132; pamphlet by, iii. 96; democratic, in Corsica, 150; August Tenth, 369; under General Cartaux, iv. 216; at Toulon, 234, 272-274; was pupil of Pichegru, 297; Josephine and, at La Cabarus's, 363, 364; Vendémiaire, 395-397; was a portentous mixture of Quack and Hero, xii. 280; his instinct for the practical, 281; his democratic faith, and heart-hatred of anarchy, 282; apostatised from his old faith in Facts, and took to believing in Semblances, 284; this Napoleonism was *unjust*, and could not last, 285; his figure titanic, xxi. 9, 19; Napoleon and Sham-Napoleon, xxiv. 365; his Opinion of Rossbach, xxvii. 347; of Leuthen, 407; of Prince Henri's Saxon Campaign of 1761, xxix. 185; *Code Napoléon*, xxx. 177: mentioned also, xxi. 97, 109, 260, 365; xxix. 407, 427; xxx. 209.
- Narbonne, Louis de, assists flight of King's Aunts, iii. 156; to be War-Minister, 280; demands by, 289; secreted, iv. 14; escapes, 21.
- Narratives, difference between mere, and the broad actual History, vii. 351; the grand source of our modern fictions, viii. 246; mimic Biographies, ix. 7; narrative the staple of speech, 219.
- Naseby described, xiv. 221, and *App.* xviii. 200. See Battle.
- Nassau, General, xxvi. 49; on march through Bohemia, xxv. 410, 413; seizes Koln, 428, 430; in retreat towards Silesia, 435; dispatched to relief of Einsiedel, 439; with Friedrich in Silesia, xxvi. 78, 79, 106, 148.
- National characteristics, vi. 36, 299; vii. 36; x. 235; suffering, vii. 105; misery the result of national misguidance, xii. 34; baptism, xxvi. 186; a Nation's diseases and its fashions, xxix. 340; dry-rot, xxi. 412; economics, 413, 424; drill-sergeants, 422; Assembly,—see Assembly.
- Nationality, xiii. 159.
- Nature, the God-written Apocalypse of, i. 50, 64; not an Aggregate but a Whole, 68, 148, 237, 249; alone antique, 103; sympathy with, 146, 172; the 'Living Garment of God,' 181; Laws of, 247; statue of, iv. 227; not dead matter, but the living mysterious Garment of the Unseen, vii. 280; viii. 331; x. 7, 75; Book of, vii. 354; xi. 94; successive Revelations, vii. 357; all one great Miracle, xii. 10, 80, 166; a righteous Umpire, 73; not dead, but alive and miraculous, xiii. 36.
- Natzmer, Captain, the Prussian Recruiter, xxii. 209; Natzmer Junior and the young Duke of Lorraine, xxiii. 13.
- Nauen, xxiii. 144.
- Navigation Act, xvi. 207.
- Navy, Louis XV. on French, ii. 55; rots, iii. 277.
- Nawaub, Europe one big ugly, xix. 393.
- Nayler, James, worshipped, xvii. 81, 156; punished, 278, 279.

- Neal, on Cromwell, xvii. 188.
- Necessity brightened into Duty, i. 97; submission to, x. 330, 357.
- Necker, and finance, account of, ii. 57; dismissed, 58; refuses Brienne, 134; recalled, 137; difficulty as to States-General, 149; reconvoques Notables, 149; opinion of himself, 169, popular 206; dismissed, 217; recalled, 249; returns in glory, 285; his plans, 298; getting unpopular, iii. 16; departs, with difficulty, 121.
- Necklace, Diamond, ii. 70, 86, 116.
- Needlewomen, distressed, xi. 191, 344; xix. 33; xxiv. 11.
- Negro population, our, up to the ears in pumpkins, xi. 174; need to be emancipated from their indolence, 179, 201; xix. 80; the Negro alone of wild men can live among men civilised, xi. 182; injustice of Negro slavery, 183; how to abolish, 195, 204; Black *Adscripti glebæ*, 207; Slavery and White Nomadism, xiii. 342; Slaves, unfit for freedom, xx. 94; their devotion to a good Master, 100. See Slavery.
- Neile, Bishop, and Popery, xv. 65; Parliament about to accuse, 66.
- Neipperg, xxiv. 143, 240; hastens to save Neisse, 297, 299, 301; quits Neisse, 303; at Mollwitz, 307; much at his ease, 313; news of the Prussian Army, 315; battle, 323; back to Neisse, 336; glad to be quiescent, 404; marches towards Breslau, xxv. 52; then to Schweidnitz, but again retires, 59; v. *gilant* manœuvring, 60; meeting with Friedrich at Klein-Schnellendorf, 87; withdraws his Army, 91; joins the Grand-Duke, 110; not a Eugene, 116; at Dettingen, 291.
- Neisse, bombardment of, xxiv. 232; pretended siege of, xxv. 91.
- Neitsche, Excise-Inspector, xxvii. 361.
- Nepomuk. See Johann of.
- Nerwinden, battle of, iv. 174.
- Nessus-shirt, our poisoned, xix. 195.
- Netherlands, occupied by French, iv. 107; wars in the, xi. 222.
- Neuchâtel, xxiv. 102; exchanged for Orange, xxi. 367.
- Neumann, Regierungs-Rath, xxx. 185.
- Neumark, xxi. 95, 140, 186, 214, 218.
- Neustadt, Prussian Army at, xxiv. 300.
- New, growth of the, x. 375; Eras, 385; all *new* things strange and unexpected, 396; Era, our heavy-laden long-eared, xix. 13, 55, 59; introduction of, xxiv. 21, 35, 328.
- New Testament, xiii. 236, 359.
- Newark, designs on, xiv. 148, 152.
- Newbury. See Battle.
- Newcastle, Earl, helps the King, xiv. 124; his Popish Army, 147; besieges Hull, 172, 175; retires disgusted, 196.
- Newcastle, Mayor of, Cromwell's letter to, xvii. 259.
- Newcastle, Duke of, xxv. 304; xxvi. 323, 419, 424-6, 435; jealous of the Duke of Cumberland, xxvii. 37-41; influence in Parliament, 136; quite insecure, 194; imbecility and futility, 194, 202; Newcastle and the clack of tongues, xxviii. 310; mentioned also, xxix. 244.
- Newhall estate, xvii. 190.
- Newman, Francis, Sterling's high esteem for, xx. 68.
- Newmarket rendezvous. See Army.
- Newport, Negotiations at, xv. 71, 86.
- Newspaper Editors, i. 43; Russian notion of, xxix. 96, 97; our Mendicant Friars, i. 244; vii. 336; their unwearied straw-thrashing, x. 270; editing, xxi. 185; rumour, xxiii. 141; what, in 1789, ii. 292; in 1790, iii. 33-37, 132, 153. See Fourth Estate.
- Newton, xxii. 84; xxiii. 310; Voltaire's high opinion of, xxx. 105.
- New Year's Day, when. See Year.
- Nibelungen Lied, the, viii. 147-211; an old German Epos of singular poetic interest, 166; extracts from, and condensed sketch of the Poem, 171; antiquarian researches into its origin, 202.
- Nicholas, Capt., at Chepstow, xv. 9.
- Nicholas, Czar, xxx. 208 n.
- Nichols, cited, xxix. 145 n.
- Nicolai, xxii. 303; xxiii. 4, 11 n., 38; xxvi. 342; his account of La Mettrie's death, 356; defence of Friedrich, 372: cited, xxi. 58 n., 140 n.; xxii. 306 n.; xxiii. 11 n.; xxiv. 26 n., 85 n.; xxvi. 195 n.; xxvii. 316 n.

- Nièvre-Chol, Mayor of Lyons, iv. 158.
 Nigger Question, the, xi. 171-210, 343-6.
 Night-Moth, Tragedy of the, vi. 389.
 Nikolai, Professor, of Frankfurt, xxviii. 233.
 Nimburg, xxiii. 157.
 Nimwogen, Peace of, xxi. 366.
 Nineteenth Century, our poor, and its indestructible Romance, x. 7; at once destitute of faith and terrified at scepticism, 244, 250; an age all calculated for strangling heroisms, xi. 237; intellect of, xix. 155. See Present Time, European Revolution.
 Ninon de l'Enclos, xxi. 359.
 Nivernois, Duc de, xxvii. 32.
 Noailles, Maréchal, xxiii. 212; xxv. 266, 272, 276; at siege of Philippsburg, xxiii. 223; at Dettingen, xxv. 286, 296; prepared for the worst, 301, 314, 382, 389, 415; xxvi. 69.
 Nobility, *Ig-*, vii. 60; xi. 183; xix. 251, 400.
 Noble, young, true education of the, xix. 216. See Aristocracy.
 Nobleness, old, may become a new reality, vii. 341; meaning of, xiii. 224. See Aristocracy.
 Noble's Memoirs criticised, xiv. 17.
 Nobles, state of the, under Louis XV., ii. 13; new, 15; join Third Estate, 208; Emigrant, errors of, iii. 286.
 Noltenius, xxii. 61.
 Nomadism, xi. 189, 192; uglier than slavery, xix. 50.
 Nordlingen, xxiii. 132.
 Norham, situation of, xv. 66.
 Norman Nobles, x. 368; Normans and Saxons originally of one stock, 390; invasion, the, xi. 339.
 Norris, Admiral, xxii. 464; xxv. 362.
 Norroy, xxi. 75.
 North, Mr. Henry, of Mildenhall, xi. 145.
 North, Sir Dudley, Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 204.
 Northern Archaeology, viii. 147.
 Norton, Col. Richard, serves under Earl Manchester, xiv. 168; notice of, 319, 325; Cromwell's letters to, 319, 324, 326; purged by Pride, xv. 113; in Little Parliament, xvi. 230; in Council of State, 271 n.
 Nostitz, General, at Kolin, xxvii. 226, 232; wounded at Leuthen, 382.
 Notables, Calonne's convocation of, ii. 86; assembled, 22d Feb. 1787, 88; members of, 88; organied out, 97; effects of dismissal of, 97; reconvoled (6th November 1788), 149; dismissed again, 150.
 Nothingness of life, i. 175.
 Nottingham, Charles I. erects his standard at, xiv. 119; xvi. 170.
 Nova Scotia, ceded to the English, xxvi. 431; occupied for Cromwell, xviii. 278.
 Novalis, on Man, xii. 13; Belief, 68, 69, Shakspeare, 126; his perplexity with *Wilhelm Meister*, vi. 270; vii. 294; speculations on French Philosophy, 242; account of, 249-310; parentage and youth, 258; death of his first love, 261; literary labours, 268; illness and death, 269; his Idealism, 279; extracts from his *Lehrlinge zu Sais*, &c., 281; Philosophic Fragments, 292; *Hymns to the Night*, and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, 297; intellectual and moral characteristics, 306.
 Nouvelle, translated from Goethe, ix. 434-448.
 Novels, Fashionable, ix. 7; partially living, 11; what they must come to, 230; Scott's Historical Novels, x. 274.
 Noverre, M., Ballet-composer, xxx. 17.
 Noy, Attorney, conduct of, in 1632, xiv. 72; his advancement, death and dissection, 74, 75.
 Noyades, Nantes, iv. 275.
 Nugent, General, at siege of Dresden, xxix. 32.
 Nürnberg, xxi. 107; xxii. 418; xxiii. 135. See Friedrich Burggraf of.
 Nüssler, xxii. 299; xxiii. 68; xxiv. 302; xxv. 122; makes survey of Silesia, 167; settles the Silesian Boundaries, 208, successfully appeals to the King on behalf of his ruined neighbours, xxix. 360-363; mentioned also, 98.
 OATH, of the Tennis-Court, ii. 202; National, iii. 45, 78.
 Obedience, the lesson of, i. 98, 240;

- duty of, x. 406; value of, xiii. 110; wise, 201; true and false, xix. 370, 395; all called to learn, xxii. 483.
- Oberg, Baron von, xxiii. 364, 397.
- Oberg, General, beaten by Soubise, xxviii. 124.
- Obermayr, Johann Euchar von, manages at München the instalment of Karl Theodor, xxx. 143.
- Oblique Order, the, xxvii. 383, 389.
- Oblivion, the dark page on which Memory writes, ix. 221; a still resting-place, xiii. 166; and remembrance, xiv. 9. See Memory.
- O'Bryen, Barnabas, notice of, xv. 147.
- Obscene wit, ix. 277.
- Obscenities, hankering for, xxvi. 373.
- Obstinacy, female, xxvi. 114.
- O'Connell on the wings of blarney, xx. 295.
- October Fifth (1789), ii. 314-320.
- Oczakow, siege of, xxiii. 348.
- Odin, the first Norse 'man of genius,' xii. 25, historic rumours and guesses, 27; how he came to be deified, 29; invented 'runes,' 32; Hero, Prophet, God, 33.
- O'Donnell succeeds Deville, xxviii. 284.
- Oerzen, General, xxvii. 95.
- Officers, one hundred, remonstrate with Cromwell on Kingship, xvii. 282; petition of, on Kingship, xviii. 76.
- Ogé, condemned, iii. 274.
- Ogilvy, General, defends Prag, xxv. 112; Commandant at Prag, 400, 403.
- Ogle, Sir Chaloner, in the Carthagena Expedition, xxiv. 393, 396.
- Ohlau, description of, xxiv. 222.
- Okey, Col., taken at Bristol siege, xiv. 235; at Inverkeithing fight, xvi. 157; Republican, xvii. 16.
- Olaf, King, and Thor, xii. 46.
- Old age, reverence for, xix. 10.
- Old-clothes, heaps of, xx. 3.
- Oldenburg, Duke, his present to Cromwell, xvii. 82.
- Oldenburg, General von, enters Erfurt, xxvii. 191: cited, 192 n.
- Oliva, the Demoiselle d', x. 61; xxx. 258.
- Oliva, Peace of, xxi. 358.
- Olmutz, an ancient pleasant little city, xxviii. 27; besieged by Friedrich, 30, 44.
- O'Neil, Henry, joins Ormond, xv. 207.
- O'Neil, Hugh, Governor of Clonmel, xv. 295.
- O'Neil, Owen Roe, character of, xv. 179.
- Onslow, Sir Richard, in Kingship Committee, xviii. 23.
- Onyx Ring*, the, Sterling's Tale of, xx. 155, 185, still worth reading, 187.
- Opera, the, xi. 231-238; xix. 393.
- Opitz, Silesian poet, xxiv. 176.
- Oppeln, xxi. 242, 293; xxiv. 381; Duke of, beheaded at Neisse, 233.
- Opportunity, miraculous, xxiv. 146.
- Orange, Princess of, xxi. 56; Prince of, xxiii. 236, 251, 358, 361; xxv. 138; assists Guichard, xxviii. 162; Principality of, xxiv. 102.
- Oranienburg, xxi. 367.
- Oratory and Rhetoric, viii. 335.
- Order to Keeper of St. James's Library, xv. 118; of Merit, Friedrich's, xxiv. 8. See Estate, Third.
- Ordinance, Self-denying, xiv. 201, 206; of Militia. See Militia.
- Ordinances of Cromwell, xvii. 8, 9.
- Organising, what may be done by, xvi. 323, 336.
- Original Man, difficulty of understanding an, vi. 291, 294, vii. 20, 249; viii. 89; x. 99, 183, 309; the world's injustice to, vii. 70, 167; ix. 64; uses of, viii. 389, 393, 395; ix. 123; xi. 124; no one with absolutely *no* originality, ix. 52; an original scoundrel, 316; the world's wealth consists solely in its original men, and what they do for it, x. 101; is the *sincere* man, xii. 55, 149. See Man.
- Originality, xii. 162. See Path-making.
- Orlamunde, xxii. 413.
- Orléans, High Court at, iii. 293; prisoners, massacred at Versailles, iv. 58-60.
- Orléans, a Duke d', in Louis XV.'s sick-room, ii. 20; another, disbelieves in death, 22.
- Orléans, Philippe (Egalité), Duke d', *Duke de Chartres* (till 1785), ii. 88; waits on Dauphin, father, with Louis XV., 20; not Admiral, 55; wealth, debauchery, Palais-Royal buildings,

- 61; balloons, 62; in Notables (*Duke d'Orléans* now), 88; looks of, *Bed-of-Justice* (1787), 114, 115; arrested, 115; liberated, 119; pseudo-author, 147; in States-General Procession, 180; joins Third Estate, 207; his party, in Constituent Assembly, 274; Fifth October and, 355; shunned in England, iii. 32; to be Regent? *Mirabeau*, 141; cash gone, how, 141; use of, in Revolution, 142; accused by Royalists, 165; at Court, insulted, 279, in National Convention (*Egalité* henceforth), iv. 65; decline of, in Convention, 107, 161; vote on King's trial, 129, 132; at King's execution, 137; arrested, imprisoned, 184; condemned, 259; politeness, and execution, 260; his son,—see *Louis-Philippe*.
- Orleans*, Duke of, xxviii. 346.
- Orleans*, Duchess of, xxvii. 338.
- Orleans*, Regent d', xxii. 92, 117; xxiii. 305, 307; xxvi. 207 n.
- Orlich*, cited, xxiii. 259 n.; xxiv. 159 n., 238 n.; xxv. 402 n.; xxvii. 246 n.
- Orlof*, Alexei, xxix. 283; in the Russian-Turk War, xxx. 29.
- Orlof*, Gregory, Czarina's lover, xxix. 281, 283, 384; helps in the murder of Czar Peter, 283, 287.
- Ormesson*, d', Controller of Finance, ii. 81; his Uncle, on States-General, 102, 119.
- Ormond*, Earl, Irish levied by, xiv. 265; character of, 302; strong in Ireland, xv. 117; routed by Jones, 154; at Wexford, 198; at Ross, 201, plotting in England, xviii. 111, 138, 144.
- Orpheus*, i. 254.
- Orseln*, Werner von, xxi. 162.
- Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy, iii. 194.
- Orzelska*, Countess, xxii. 219, 227, 382, 384; xxvi. 178.
- Osiander*, Dr., xxi. 256, 260.
- Osnabrück*, Ernst August, Bishop of, xli. 45; xxii. 202; his death, 271.
- Ostein*, Graf von, xxv. 278, 297.
- Ostend East-India Company*, Karl VI.'s, xxii. 111.
- Ostermann*, Russian Statesman, xxiv. 259.
- Ost-Friesland*, Friedrich takes possession of, xxv. 373.
- O'Sullivan*, xxvi. 137.
- Oswestry*, Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 288.
- Otes*, described, xiv. 99.
- Otho*, King of Greece, xxx. 148.
- Otley*, Col., at disbanding of Rump, xvi. 225.
- Ottmachan*, Prussians take, xxiv. 226.
- Otto*, Duke of Meran, slain, xxi. 128.
- Otto III.*, last of 'Saxon Kaisers,' xxi. 81, 85.
- Otto III.*, Elector of Brandenburg, xxi. 120.
- Otto of Stettin*, Duke, burial of, xxi. 219.
- Otto*, last Bavarian Elector of Brandenburg, xxi. 176.
- Otto with the Arrow*, xxi. 142.
- Ottocar*, King of Bohemia, xxi. 119; scandalous plight before Rudolf of Hapsburg, 137.
- "On' clo'," the fateful Hebrew Prophecy, xix. 40, 91, 96, 395.
- Ouse river*, xiv. 89.
- Overbury* poisoned, xiv. 42.
- Overend-Gurney* bankruptcies, xi. 377.
- Overton*, Col., Governor of Hull, xiv. 308; in Scots War, xvi. 11, 50; at Inverkeithing, 156, 157; Republican, xvii. 16; sent to the Tower, 87.
- Overton*, Richard, a Leveller, xv. 131.
- Over-population*, i. 219; x. 418; 'preventive check,' 419; infanticide, 421; emigration, 422.
- Over-production*, charge of, xiii. 213, 253.
- Owen*, Col., Sir John, in Wales, xiv. 301; delinquent, xv. 86, 89.
- Owen*, Dr., in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23; preaches to Second Parliament, 204.
- Own*, conservation of a man's, i. 192.
- Oxenstiern*, xxi. 344.
- Oxford*, Charles I. at, xiv. 141; surrendered, 254; Cromwell &c. feasted at, xv. 145; University reformed, xvi. 131; Cromwell Chancellor of, 131; Cromwell and, xviii. 257, 287 See *Eton*.
- PACHE*, Swiss, account of, iii. 28, Mi-

- nister of War, iv. 97; Mayor, 195; dismissed, reinstated, 196; imprisoned, 323.
- Pack, Sir Christopher, motion by, xvii. 281.
- Packer, Lieut.-Col., notice of, xiv. 186, 188.
- Paganism, Scandinavian, xii. 6; not mere Allegory, 8; Nature-worship, 10, 35; Hero-worship, 14; creed of our fathers, 19, 42, 44; Impersonation of the visible workings of Nature, 21; contrasted with Greek Paganism, 23; the first Norse Thinker, 25; main practical Belief; indispensable to be brave, 37; hearty, homely, rugged Mythology; Balder, Thor, 40; Consecration of Valour, 47.
- Paine, 'Common Sense,' iii. 28; that there be a Republic (1791), 206; naturalised, iv. 10; in National Convention, 64; escapes guillotine, 349.
- Palais-Royal, change in use of, ii. 61; spouting at, 196, 210, 250, 300.
- Palfy, Count, xxv. 32, 79, 399.
- Pallandt, General, Friedrich's sympathy for, xxv. 192.
- Palmbach, General, tries to get Colberg, xxviii. 80.
- Palmerston's, Lord, notion of merit, xi. 380.
- Pamphlets on Civil War, King's, xiv. 4, 5, 109.
- Pan, Mallet du, solicits for Louis, iii. 277.
- Pan, the ancient symbol of, ix. 40.
- Pandarus Dogdraught, xiii. 305, 315.
- Pandora's box, iii. 18.
- Pandour, xxiv. 273 n, 296.
- Panin, Grand-Duke Paul's tutor, xxix. 281, 285.
- Panis, Advocate, in Governing Committee, iv. 12; and Beaumarchais, 24; confidant of Danton, 84.
- Panis-Briefe, xxx. 208.
- Pannewitz, Colonel, xxii. 462.
- Pantheism, xx. 152.
- Pantheon, first occupant of, iii. 177.
- Panzendorf, xxii. 61.
- Panzern, Widow, xxiv. 332.
- Paoli, General, friend of Napoleon, iii. 150.
- Paper, Age of, uses of, ii. 35; blotting, not in use, xiv. 273 n; rag-, invention of, viii. 263.
- Papist Army, Newcastle's, xiv. 147; Monuments destroyed, 152.
- Papistry, xxii. 19, 50; the Catholic Bull taken by the tail and taught manners, 47; a Papist conversion, 103; absolution, xxiii. 195. See Popes.
- Papists, to be hanged, xiv. 196; cruelties in Ireland, xv. 196, 238; against Protestants, xviii. 117, 118.
- Paradise and Fig-leaves, i. 36; prospective Paradises, 131, 141; the dream of, viii. 359, to all-and-sundry, xix. 79, 96.
- Paraguay and its people, xi. 97.
- Parchments, venerable and not venerable, xiii. 216, 225.
- Pardubitz, Pandours try to get into, xxv. 429.
- Parents, Curate, renounces religion, iv. 278.
- Paris, origin of city, ii. 9; police in 1750, 15 (see Parlement); ship Ville-de-Paris, 55; riot at Palais-de-Justice, 108; beautified (in 1788), 122; election (1789), 153, troops called to, 194; military preparations in, 209; July Fourteenth, cry for arms, 219, 231, search for arms, 223; Bailly, mayor of, 248; trade-strikes in, 294; Lafayette patrols, 301; October Fifth, propositions to Louis, 341; illuminated, 343 (iii. 46); Louis in, 359; foreigners flock to, 27; Journals, 35, 36, 133, 153; bill-stickers, 36, 133; undermined, 69, 159; after Champ-de-Mars Federation, 81; on Nanci affair, 120; on death of Mirabeau, 175; on Flight to Varennes, 204-207; on King's return, 230; Directory suspends Pétition, 330; enlisting (1792), 341 (iv. 32); on forfeiture of King, 352; Sections, rising of, 355 (see Sections); August Tenth, prepares for insurrection, 355-359; Municipality, supplanted, 359; statues torn down, King and Queen to prison, 375; Prisons (see Prisons); September 1792, iv. 53; names printed on house-door,

- 176; in insurrection, Girondins (May 1793), 196, 197, Municipality in red nightcaps, 288; brotherly supper, 327; like a Mahlstom (Thermidor), 350; Sections to be abolished, 361; brightened up (1795), 361-4; Gilt Youth, 366.
- Pâris, Guardsman, assassinates Lepelletier, iv. 133.
- Pâris, friend of Danton, iv. 317.
- Pâris, Abbé, xxiv. 254.
- Park, cited, xxiii. 396 n.
- Parker, Sir Philip, xi. 145.
- Parker, Mr., Cromwell's letter to, xvi. 226.
- Parlement, Douai, will alone register Edicts, ii. 129; of Paris, reestablished, 86; is patriotic, 77, 103; on registering Edicts, 100; against Taxation, 101, 103, remonstrates, at Versailles, 102; arrested, 106; origin of, 106; nature of, corrupt, 106; at Troyes, yields, 109; Royal Session in, 113-5; how to be tamed, 121; oath and declaration of, 124; firmness of, 124-129; scene in, and dismissal of, 127; reinstated, 138; unpopular, 146; summons Dr. Guilotin, 157, abolished, iii. 15.
- Parlements, provincial, adhere to Paris, ii. 105, 116; rebellious, 119, 127; exiled, 130; grand deputations of, 131; reinstated, 138; abolished, iii. 14.
- Parliament, insufficiency of, x. 328; during the last century, 381; fighting by Parliamentary eloquence, 395; on Parliamentary Radicalism, 402; an Election to the Long, xi. 139-168; Samuel Duncon's affidavits concerning the election for Suffolk, 147; 'short and true relation' of the same by Sir Simonds D'Ewes, 155; his valuable Notes of the Long Parliament, 165; Penny-Newspaper, xi. 389; and the Courts of Westminster, xiii. 12, 319; a Parliament starting with a lie in its mouth, 314.
- Parliament, Third, of Charles I., xiv. 58; is Puritan, 59; its Petition of Right, 59; doings of, 60; Alured's letter about, 60; prorogued, 64; dissolved, 66; holds down the Speaker, 67; conduct after, 68; Short, summoned 1640, 105; dissolved, 105; Long, summoned 3d Nov. 1640, 106; sketch of, 106, votes against Bishops, 109; secures the Militia, 118; grand Petition of, 121; Charles I. attempts to seize Five Members, 123; goes to City for refuge, 128; how it raises army, 124; affairs in July 1643, 168; takes the Scots Covenant, Sept. 1643, 174; affairs in 1644, 201; disagreement of Generals, 202; affairs prosper, 255; new Members elected (Recruiters), 255; Army turns on it, 279, 281; declares against Army, 285; votes lands to Cromwell, 320; number of Members in 1648, 326 (see Members); purged by Pride, xv. 102 (see Rump); new one to be elected, xvi. 195, 213; difficulties in choosing, 220; Little, summons for, 228; members of, 230; meets 4th July 1653, 230; failure of, 265; doings and resignation of, 270-273; Long, List of, 279-312; First Protectorate, assembles 3d Sept. 1654, xvii. 22-24; unsuccessful, 49; signs the Recognition, 79, doings of, 80, 81; dissolved, 122; Second Protectorate assembles 17th Sept. 1656, 204; action in Sindercomb's Plot, 268; doings of, 275-278; offers Cromwell title of King, 281 &c.; presses him to accept it, 292; second session of, xviii. 100; Two Houses disagree, 113; dissolved, 144.
- Parliament, modern recipe of, xix. 19; the English Parliament once a Council of actual Rulers, 37, 261, 276; now an enormous National Palaver, 122, 235, 266; what it has done for us, 148; kind of men sent there, 172, 273; Parliamentary career, 229; Parliamentary bagpipes, 240, 250.
- Parliaments, xix. 259-304; origin of our English Parliaments, 261; the Long Parliament, 264, 275; position of Parliament become false and impossible, 265; with a Free Press the real function of Parliament goes on everywhere continually, 267; Adviser of the Sovereign, or Sovereign itself, 270, 279; Newspaper Reporters in a Parliament and Nation no

- longer in earnest, 272; the French Convention all in deadly earnest, 278; Chartist Parliament, 280; a Parliament indispensable, 287; condensed Folly of Nations, 288; superseded by Books, xii. 194; Cromwell's, 271; reduced to its simplest expression, xxii. 165, 166; Constitutional, 167; English, 169, 355; xxiii. 71; Female, 317; compact, xxiv. 12, 34; Parliamentary sleeping dogs, 42, 383; Mr. Viner in, 378; Ost-Friesland Parliament reformed, xxv. 374.
- Pascal and Novalis, resemblances between, vii. 308.
- Pascopol, the, xxvii. 81, 82.
- Pass, form of, in 1649, xv. 114.
- Passau, Peace of, xxi. 265; xxv. 41, 282.
- Passivity and Activity, i. 97, 155.
- Past, the, inextricably linked with the Present, i. 165; forever extant, 251; and Fear, iv. 103; the fountain of all Knowledge, vii. 352; ix. 216; the true Past never dies, viii. 371; ix. 62; sacred interest of, ix. 16, 44; the whole, the possession of the Present, xii. 47; Present and Future, xiii. 47, 298, 310, 331.
- Path-making, xiii. 158.
- Patrons of genius and convivial Mæcenases, vii. 53; patronage twice cursed, 59; ditto twice *blessed*, ix. 68.
- 'Paul and Virginia,' by St. Pierre, ii. 74.
- Paul, Czarowitch, xxiii. 159, xxvii. 28; parentage, xxix. 262; night of his father's murder, 285, 375; his second wife, 261 n.; xxx. 13, 121; his first wife, 91, 92; he visits Berlin, 120.
- Paul's, St., Cross described, xiv. 65; Cathedral, a horseguard, xv. 140.
- Pauli, cited, xxi. 87 n.; xxvii. 122 n., 188 n.
- Paulmy, Marquis de, xxvi. 380.
- Pauperism, ix. 201.
- Paupers, what to do with, i. 222; our Irish and British, xix. 43, address to, 46; Pauperism, our Social Sin grown manifest, 191, 198.
- Pauw, Cornelius de, xxx. 211.
- Peace, keeping the, the function of a policeman, xix. 166; something more sacred than 'peace,' 331; *Eia*, the much-predicted, i. 169.
- Peak, Sir Robert, taken at Basing, xiv. 245.
- Peasant Saint, the, i. 221.
- Pedant, the, xix. 119.
- Pedantry, xiii. 61.
- Pedants, learned, xxii. 20, 174.
- Peel, Sir Robert, the one likely or possible Reformer of Downing Street, xix. 112; his 'eleventh hour,' 204; and Wellington, Edward Sterling's admiration of, xx. 289, 294; note of thanks from Sir Robert Peel, 292.
- Peerage, the English, once a noble reality, xi. 313-4; past and present, xix. 340. See Aristocracy.
- Peitsch, Professor, xxix. 158.
- Pelham, and the Whole Duty of Dan-dies, i. 268.
- Pelham, xxvi. 225; Pelham Parliaments, xxvii. 197, 202.
- Pellegrini, Count de, xxx. 23.
- Peltier, Royalist Pamphleteer, iv. 21.
- Pembroke besieged by Cromwell, xv. 4, 16.
- Pembroke, Earl, sent to Charles I., xiv. 265; Chancellor of Oxford, xvi. 131.
- Penalties, xxi. 270.
- Penn, Admiral, sails with the fleet, xvii. 84; sent to the Tower, 152, 158-161.
- Penn, Quaker, xvii. 158.
- Penruddock, Col., in arms, xvii. 130; beheaded, 130; Cromwell's letters relative to, xviii. 272, 273 (*App.*).
- Penthèvre, Duc de, xxvi. 207 n.
- Peoples'-Books, viii. 279.
- 'Père Duchesne,' Editor of, iii. 133; iv. 157.
- Pereyra, Walloon, account of, iii. 27; imprisoned, iv. 312.
- Periodical Windmills, vii. 319.
- Permanence the first condition of all fruitfulness, xiii. 341, 344.
- Permanency in human relations the basis of all good, xi. 192.
- Perruques blondes, iv. 304.
- Perry, Alderman, xxiii. 374.

- Perseverance, law of, i. 229.
- Person, mystery of a, i. 64, 127, 131, 231.
- Perth surrenders, xvi. 166.
- Pertz, cited, xxiv. 133 n.
- Perusa, Karl Albert's Ambassador at Vienna, xxiv. 353, 354.
- Pesne's Portraits, xxi. 425, 454, 456; xxiii. 140; at Remsburg, 287; his portrait of King Friedrich, xxv. 159.
- Peter's, St., in masquerade, xx. 219.
- Peter's, St., Church at Berlin burnt down, xxii. 373.
- Peter Czar, xxi. 443; xxii. 87; visits Friedrich Wilhelm at Berlin, 3; the strangest mixture of heroic virtue and brutish Samoeitic savagery, 6; at Magdeburg, 8; his physiognomy, 11; mentioned also, xxix. 261; xxx. 247.
- Peter Federowitz, Czar, xxv. 351, 353; xxvii. 23, 25, 28, 29; becomes Peter III. of Russia, xxix. 258, 259; genealogy and tragical career, 260-264; ardent profession of friendship for Friedrich, 273, 275, 281; tries to reconcile Bieren and Munnich, 274; magnanimous improvements, 276; always in a plunge of hurries, 279; fetches Colonel Hordt from the Czarina, 280; turning-point in his history, 280; brutally murdered, 285; his funeral, 286.
- Peterborough, Earl, notice of, xv. 148.
- Peterloo, xii. 21.
- Peters, Rev. Hugh, chaplain of train, xiv. 217; secretary to Cromwell, 244; his narrative of Basing, 247; at Putney, 299; at Pembroke, xv. 4; in Ireland, 154; Cromwell to be King, xvi. 183.
- Petersburg, Treaty of, xxvii. 12; resolution at, to reduce the House of Brandenburg to its former mediocrity, 16, 17, 24; Hanbury Williams's Treaty signed at, 24; Colonel Hordt released from the citadel of, at the accession of Peter III., xxix. 273; presented at Court, 273; Bieren and Munnich home from Siberia, 274; Pastor Btsching assists in the Homagings to Peter III., 275; Czarina Elizabeth lies in state, 277; her funeral, 279; Catharine's evening parties, 279; plots and riots, ending in murder of the Czar, 282-286; Prince Henri sumptuously entertained by the Czarina, xxx. 39-42; Suhm there ready to transact loans, xxiii. 394; Anton Ulrich's wedding at, 405.
- Peterswalde, xxv. 401.
- Pétion, account of, ii. 177; Dutch-built, iii. 10; and D'Espréménil, 164; to be mayor, 167; Varennes, meets King, iii. 230; and Royalty, 232, 356; at close of Assembly, 249; in London, 251; Mayor of Paris, 299; in Twentieth June, 323; suspended, 330; reinstated, 339; welcomes Marseillaise, 349; August Tenth, in Tuileries, 356; rebukes Septemberers, iv. 52; in National Convention, 63; declines mayorship, 99; and his violin, 171; against Mountain, 187, retreat of, to Bourdeaux, 220-36; end of, 250.
- Pétion, National-Pique, christening of, iii. 312.
- Petition of famishing French, 1775, ii. 42; on capture of King, iii. 235; at Fatherland's altar, 236-39; of the Eight Thousand, 314, for deposition, &c. 352; of Washerwomen, iv. 148; of Right, xiv. 59; altered, 65; London, 108, 286; Buckinghamshire, 120; Surrey, xv. 10; of Officers, xvi. 213; and Advice of Parliament, xvii. 282; xviii. 74, 75, 80, 84.
- Petitot, cited, xxiii. 208 n.
- Peyrau, Dr., xxx. 226.
- Peyssonnel, cited, xxx. 60 n.
- Pezay, *Campagnes de Marillebois*, cited, xxv. 233 n.
- Pezzl, cited, xxvii. 122 n.; xxx. 23 n.
- Pfalz, Kur, in subsidy of France, xxvii. 355.
- Pfalz-Neuburg, Wolfgang Wilhelm, xxi. 312, 316; claims the Cleve Heritage, 313, 323; face slapped, 325; conference with the Great Kurfürst, 355; his Grandson Karl Philip, xxii. 42.
- Pfanner, cited, xxi. 326 n.
- Pfan, General, at Kunersdorf, xxviii. 233.

- Pffeffel, cited, xxi. 407 n.
 Pfitzner, xxv. 130.
 Phayr, Col., at execution of Charles I., xv. 106; at Cork, 211; Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 237.
 Phélippeaux, purged out of the Jacobins, iv. 312.
 Philanthropy, indiscriminate, xix. 61; threatening to drown human society as in deluges, 79.
 Philip II., King of Spain, xxiv. 357.
 Philip, Kur-Pfalz, xxv. 119, 186, 343.
 Philip's, Don, claim on the Milanese, xxv. 231; xxvi. 174, 199, 219, 229 n.; xxviii. 375.
 Philip of Hessen, xxi. 125, 126, 247, 282, entrapped by Karl V., 283.
 Philip, Theodor, Kur-Pfalz, xxv. 343.
 Philippina Charlotte, xxii. 96; xxiii. 20, 183; wedded to Karl of Brunswick, 92, 190; their Sons, 366.
 Philips, the English Groom, xxiii. 414.
 Philipsburg, siege of, xxiii. 212, 220; xxv. 385.
 Phillimore, cited, xxii. 262 n.
 Phillips, Captain, in battle of Minden, xxviii. 195, 196.
 Philosopher in office, ii. 36.
 Philosophies, Cause-and-Effect, i. 35; French, ii. 36, 37; iii. 32; ix. 229, 260.
Philosophische Briefe, character of Schiller's, v. 60.
 Philosophism, influence of, on Revolution, ii. 16; what it has done with Church, 45; with Religion, 72; disappointment on succeeding, iii. 32.
 Philosophy teaching by experience, vii. 347; ix. 6. See Kant.
 Phocion and Demosthenes, xi. 321.
 Phoenix Death-birth, i. 229, 236, 259.
 Phosphorus, Werner's parable of, vi. 127.
 Piacenza, Battle of, xxvi. 200 n.
 Piast Dukes, the, xxiv. 173.
 Picard, Voltaire's servant, xxvi. 297, 302.
 Piccadilly, derivation of, xviii. 75 n.
 Piccolomini, Graf von, defends Brieg, xxiv. 373; mentioned, xxvii. 66, 78.
 Pichegru, General, notice of, iv. 296; in *Germinal*, 376.
 Pickering, Col., at Bristol siege, xiv. 236; at Basing, 245; his death and funeral, xviii. 203.
 Pickering, Sir Gilbert, in Council of State, xvi. 271 n.; xvii. 8 n.
 Pictures, xxi. 455, 456.
 Piedmont, persecution in, xvii. 134, 140, 141, xviii. 149.
 Pierpoint, Mr., xv. 46; Cromwell at his house, xvi. 170; and Cromwell on Kingship, xvii. 311.
 Pierre, Abbé St., xxiv. 114.
 Pig-philosophy, xix. 379.
 Pikes, fabricated,—see Arms; Feast of, iii. 82; in 1793, iv. 226-28.
 Pilate, xiii. 17.
 Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, xiv. 31.
 Pillau, xxiii. 29, 389.
 Pilnitz, Convention at, iii. 284.
 Pin, Latour du, War-Minister, iii. 107, 121; dismissed, 154.
 Pinchbeck invented by Prince Rupert, xv. 212.
 Pine, John, the English Engraver, xxiii. 379.
 Pinkerton's stories of Cromwell, value of, xvi. 91.
 Pinto, Major Graf von, xxx. 212, 224, 260.
 Pipin, King, xxiv. 101.
 Pirch, Page von, at siege of Schweidnitz, xxix. 314, 315 n.
 Pitra, bookseller, xxix. 272.
 Pitt, William, against France, iii. 284; and Grondins, iv. 149; inflexible, 370, on Spain, xxiii. 404; his life-element, xxv. 9; xxvi. 228; eyes bent on America, 437, 442, 453; anxious to treat with Friedrich, xxvii. 26; the one hope of England, 38; tries to help Friedrich, 136; impatient of the Duke of Newcastle, 194, 195, 202; depth of sad conviction about England, 195; his speeches full of genius, 196-199; like Friedrich, a born King, 199, xxviii. 311; stages of his course, xxvii. 201-205; thinks America may be conquered in Germany, 285; assists Friedrich against France, 325, 351, 352; subsidies, xxviii. 14; descent on Rochefort, 21; better hopes of America, 22, 49; at his zenith in public reputation, 132; sends Wolfe against Quebec, 198; &

despotic sovereign, though a temporary one, 237, 311; resources and promptitudes, 255; reply to Parliamentary congratulations, 310; America and India both to be his, 313; important Spanish notions from Lord Marischal, 378; increases Ferdinand's army, xxix. 42, 141, consequence to him of George II.'s death, 144, 146; his peace-negotiations with Choiseul suddenly explode into war with Spain, 208, 209, 242; his last Cabinet Council, 243; Bute's shameful peace, 333; English America due to Pitt, 341; Friedrich's esteem for, xxx. 125; Smelfungus's memoranda on, 126, 127.

Pitt, Mr., at Berlin, xxx. 123.

Pittsburg, xxvi. 441 n.; taken by Forbes, xxviii. 122.

Pity, xvi. 70.

Placard Journals, iii. 35.

Plague, Army escapes, in 1645, xiv. 239.

Plantagenet Kings, Mother of our, xxi. 91; their family name, 99; worth to England, 423.

Plassenburg, Castle of, xxi. 110, 128, 236, 267.

Plate fleet, prize of, xvii. 255.

Platen, Adjutant von, death of, xxvii. 180.

Platen, General von, xxiii. 390; in Hinter-Pommern, xxviii. 28, 47; in Poland, 148; dispatched after Buttulin, xxix. 197; marches to Colberg, 198, 214, 235.

Plauen Canal, xxv. 348.

Playfair, cited, xxviii. 304.

Playwrights, German and English, vii. 117; tricks of the trade, 125, 132, 149.

Pleasure, personal, vii. 238, 338; viii. 117.

Plebs, wild horse of a, xi. 391.

Plenary Court. See Court.

Plessmann, Prussian Secretary, xxvi. 445; xxvii. 64.

Ploschke, Friedrich's Guide at Mollwitz, xxiv. 312.

Ploto, Baron von, and his Reich's pleadings, xxvii. 139, 249; will not be served with Citatio, 321-323; gathers documents concerning the

French invasion, 354-362; offers peace or war to the Reich's Princes, xxix. 327.

Plot, Gunpowder, xiv. 40; of Army, 106, 118; Waller's, 161; by Rev. C. Love, &c, xvi. 152; Anabaptist, xvii. 4, 5, Royalist, 6, 17, 127; xviii. 98, 112, 146; various Republican, xvii. 16, 98-105, Gerard's, 17, 20; in the North, 87; Penruddock's, 129; Sexby's, 196; Sindercomb's, 266; Venner's, 297; Hewit and Slingsby's, xviii. 145, 146.

Plots, of Louis's flight, ii. 303 (and iii. 150, 153, 154, 198-202); various, of Aristocrats, October Fifth, 311, 327; Royalist, of Favras and others, iii. 19, 143-5; cartels, Twelve bullies from Switzerland, 150, D'Inisdal, will-o'-wisp, 152; Mirabeau and Queen, 160-163; poniards, 229-277; Mallet-du-Pan, 277; Narbonne's, 280; traces of, in Armoire de Fer, iv. 114; against Girondins, 171; Desmoulins on, 193; by Pitt? 311, 328, prison, 324, 333-337.

Plotz, xxiii. 145.

Plugson of Undershot, xiii. 235, 257.

Plunket, Thomas, xxviii. 249.

Podewils, xxiv. 33, 54, 146; xxv. 20, 24, 43, 95; xxvi. 43, 52, 144, 156; interview with D'Arget at Dresden, 172: cited, xxv. 261 n.

Poet, the, and Prophet, xii. 95, 117, 130; what he should be, xix. 382, 387; the highest, fittest Historian, xxi. 23.

Poetic culture, vi. 47, 65, 264; vii. 19.

Poetry, the true end of, vi. 77; vii. 17, 76, 294; viii. 95, 292, 323; xi. 232; English and German poetry mutually illustrative, vi. 79; Poetry can never die, 99, not a mere stimulant, 252, 297; vii. 335; our theories and genetic histories of, viii. 219; poetry as Apologue, 245; what implied by a nation's Poetry, 292; Epic, ix. 9; present condition of, 177; the *life* of each man a Poem, 311; what, xi. 365-67; and Prose, distinction of, xii. 98, 107; or Prose? a parting of the ways for Sterling, xx. 239, 249 Poems, 266, 306, 324.

Poitiers, xxvii. 345.

Poland, edging itself into the territories of Prussia, xxi. 215, 217; Partition of, 218, 358; xxiii. 176; an 'Aristocratic Republic,' xxi. 302; xxiii. 195, 197; Polish Chivalry, xxi. 359; a Polish Election, xxii. 198; early troubles in, xxiv. 173; Polish Republic, anarchic every fibre of it, xxviii. 149; xxix. 349, 418; Partition of, 399; Rulhière's History, 400-402; *Nie pozwalam*, 415; Right of Confederation, 416; little or no national business transacted, 418; the doom of Russia; feels itself to be in a most halcyon condition, 419; Jesuit fanaticism, 419; the Czarina thinks to do something handsome in regard to Poland, 420, 421; makes Poniatowski King, 422-428; Confederation of Radom, 428-432; of Bar, 433-436; last glimmer of Confederation extinguished, 440; a specimen of each class hung on a tree, 440; the Polish Patriots apply to the Turks, 441; two Campaigns quite finish them off, 443; Austria takes forcible possession of Zips, xxx. 36, 37; the Czarina proposes dismemberment, 42; Friedrich's negotiations thereupon, 45, 46; and final agreement between the Three Partitioning Powers, 47; a case of Lynch law, upon which no spoken word of approval or apology is permissible, 53, 54; early condition of Polish Prussia, 55-59; Lindsey's Letters on, 60, 61.

Poland, King of. See August III., Casimir Stanislaus.

Poland, Queen of, xxvi. 37; tries to defend the Dresden Archives, xxvii. 63, 64; civilities and difficulties with Friedrich; death, 121.

Polastron, Count, xxv. 109, 112, 148, 153.

Polignac, Duke de, a sinecurist, ii. 80; dismissed, 250; at Bâle, 278; younger, in Ham, 278.

Polignac, Cardinal de, xxiv. 253.

Politeness, Johnson's, ix. 101; who invented, xix. 237.

Political Economy, and its small 'law

of God,' xix. 54; xxvi. 325. See Dismal Science.

Politics and Religion in 1642, xiv. 129; English, restless whirl of, xx. 205; a social mine below, 221.

Pollnitz, xxii. 160, 171; xxiii. 351, 388, 410, xxiv. 135; xxv. 20, 349; receives a Testimonial, 366; cited, xxi. 54 n., 385 n.; xxii. 300 n.

Pomerania, xxi. 98, 219, 340, 457; divided by Sweden, 354, 365.

Pomfret. See Pontefract.

Pommern Regiment, the, xxvii. 375; xxviii. 388, 389; xxix. 122.

Pompadour, xxi. 170, helps Voltaire to Court, xxvi. 201, becomes indifferent to him, 205; compliments to Friedrich not accepted by him, 264; xxvii. 19; flatteries from Maria Theresa, xxvi. 423; in Committee at Babiole, xxvii. 31, 32; backs Austria at the French Court, 76; enmity to Friedrich, 134, 248, 353; xxviii. 6; very fell and feminine, 132; her death, xxix. 395.

Pompeii and its Fresco Paintings, xx. 281.

Pompignan, President of National Assembly, ii. 229.

Poniards, Royalist, iii. 152; Day of, 163, 164.

Poniatowski, Andreas, xxix. 427.

Poniatowski, Casimir, xxix. 427.

Poniatowski, Joseph, perished fighting for Napoleon, xxix. 427; mentioned also, xxx. 61.

Poniatowski, Stanislaus, at Petersburg, xxvii. 23; xxix. 263, 409; becomes King of Poland, and is crowned without loss of his hair, 420-428; a good deal of gallantry on his hands, 430; summons Russian troops, 433, 438.

Ponikau, xxvi. 446.

Pontefract, Cromwell at, xv. 81, 82.

Poor-Law Amendment Act, x. 337, 338; laudable as a *half-truth*, damnable as a whole, 341; whoever will not work ought not to live, 345.

Pope Pius VI. excommunicates Talleyrand, iii. 192; effigy of, burned, 193.

Pope, the old, with stuffed devotional rump, xui. 173.

- Pope Alexander VII., Cromwell's opinion of, xvii. 221.
- Pope, incomparable Mr., xxiii. 310.
- Pope, a reforming, and his huge unreformable Popedom, xix. 4; a glance at, through Sterling's eyes, xx. 214; a lie in livery, 216, candid confession about him, 229.
- Popery, xii. 161; in 1623, xiv. 50; images of destroyed, 152; Cromwell on, xv. 245; Cromwell to suppress, 252.
- Popes, the Avignon, xxi. 149, 151, 157; the Pope prays for a good quarrel among the Heretics, xxii. 292. See Boniface, Hildebrand, Leo X., Papistry.
- Popish States, war with, xvii. 210-216; Superstition, or Creed of Incredibilities, xxix. 350, 429.
- Popularity and Originality, vi. 291; vii. 348; viii. 3; x. 226; fell poison of popular applause, ix. 396; x. 247. See Fame.
- Porta, Baptista, xxi. 329 n.
- Porto-Bello, xxiv. 121, 391.
- Portraits, Project of a National Exhibition of Scottish, xi. 241-251.
- Portugal involved in the Spanish-English war, xxix. 245-248.
- Portuguese Treaty, xvii. 11, 21; Ambassador's brother, 21, King, 184-187.
- Posadowsky, Colonel, xxiv. 46; at Breslau, 214, 218; at Mollwitz, 324; in the Moravian Foray, xxv. 154; on march from Prag towards Austria, 410, 412.
- Posterity, appealing to, xiii. 279. See Fame.
- Potsdam Giants, Friedrich Wilhelm's, xxii. 132; xxiii. 118; their last service, 422.
- Potter's Wheel, significance of, xiii. 245.
- Pottery-Apotheosis, English, of Friedrich, xxvii. 407.
- Potts, Sir John, letter to, xiv. 138.
- Poverty, the lot of many poets and wise men, vii. 64; advantages of, 66; xii. 120, Richter's victory over, viii. 27, 30; Christian-Orthodoxy's dread of, ix. 30.
- Powel, Anabaptist, against Cromwell, xvii. 4.
- Powel, Presbyterian-Royalist Colonel, xv. 3, 122.
- Power, love of, xi. 118; definition of, xvi. 275. See Ambition.
- Powick possessed by the Scots, xvi. 175, 177.
- Pownal, Governor of New England, his Despatch to Pitt, xxviii. 311.
- Pownel, Major, at Preston fight, xv. 20.
- Poyer, Col., his doings in Wales, xv. 3, 5; shot, 123.
- Poyntz, General, enlists soldiers, xiv. 297; slashes the mob, 298.
- Poyntz, Stephen, xxii. 251.
- Practice, the Man of, xiii. 199.
- Prades, Abbé de, xxvi. 360, 395, 397, 448, 452; xxvii. 407, xxviii. 4.
- Prætorius, General, xxiii. 339; account of Friedrich's new government, xxiv. 54.
- Prag, xxi. 328, 344; xxiii. 154, 157, 160; French scalade of, xxv. 112; Austrian siege of, 229, 236; siege raised, 243; Belleisle's retreat from, 256; preparations for resisting siege of, 400, 403; taken by Friedrich, 406, left under Ensiedel, 410, 433; his difficult retreat from, 436, battle of, xxvii. 152-182, siege of, 205-210.
- Pragmatic Sanction, Karl VI.'s, xxii. 107, 252, 448; xxiii. 37; xxiv. 286, 329, 348; downbreak of, 350, 360.
- Prairial First to Third (May 20-22), 1795, iv. 381-385.
- Prasse, Sieur, xxvii. 13.
- Prayer, faithful unspoken, xiii. 284; praying by working, 288.
- Prayer-meeting, Windsor Castle, 1648, xiv. 335, &c.
- Prayers for the Parliament Army, xiv. 215; an English troop interrupted at, xvi. 32; Cromwell's last, xviii. 169.
- Preachers, triers of. See Triers.
- Preaching, Cromwell on, xvi. 74, 119; xviii. 56.
- Précý, siege of, Lyons, iv. 235, 269.
- Predestination, xxii. 477; xxiii. 45.
- Premier, what a wise, might do, xiii. 321; mad methods of choosing a, xix. 121, 226; a more unbeautiful

- class never raked out of the ooze, 163; one wise Premier the beginning of all good, 172. See King, Windbag.
- Presburg, Maria Theresa at, xxv. 79, 399.
- Presbyterianism, Charles I. averse to, xiv 190; and schism, 225; adopted by Parliament, 275; overthrown, 298. See Independents.
- Present, the, and Fear, iv. 103; Time, the, vii. 315; viii. 348, 358; in pangs of travail with the New, 363; the living sum-total of the whole Past, 371; ix. 112; youngest-born of Eternity, xix. 3-56. See Nineteenth Century.
- Presentation, Cromwell's, to Rectory of Houghton Conquest, xviii. 268.
- Prestige, xi. 377.
- Preston, Dr., fame of, xiv. 53.
- Preston. See Battle.
- Pretender, the Young, in Edinburgh, xxvi. 137.
- Pretsch, action of, xxviii. 302.
- Preuss, a meritoriously exact man, xxi. 396, and n.; account of Friedrich's domesticities, xxvi. 367, 370. cited in notes, xxi. 27; xxii. 131; xxiv. 9, 36, 50, 57, 66, 84; xxvi. 74; xxvii. 134.
- Preussen, East, taken possession of by Russia, xxviii. 7; keeps quiet, and hopes for better days, 55.
- Pride, Colonel, summoned by Commons, xiv. 235; at Preston battle, xv. 28; purges the Commons, 102; xi. 165; in Scots War, xvi. 11, 50; would hang up the Lawyers' gowns, 52 n.; one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Pride of place, the last thing that deserts a sinking house, xxi. 253.
- Priest and Philosopher, old healthy identity of, vii. 357, viii. 345; the true, a kind of Prophet, xii. 137, the noble, xiii. 300.
- Priesthood, costumes thrown off (Bishop Torné), iii. 296; costumes in Carmagnole, iv. 280. See Religion.
- Priesthoods, x. 374.
- Priestley, Dr., riot against, iii. 283; naturalised, iv. 10; elected to National Convention, 64.
- Priests, dissident, fustigated, iii. 187; marry in France, 293; Anti-national, hanged, 332, thirty killed near the Abbaye, iv. 36, number slain in September massacre, 54; to rescue Louis, 132; drowned at Nantes, 275; four hundred at anchor, 338.
- Primogeniture, Law of, xxi. 234, 298; xxii. 412.
- Prince, Thomas, Leveller, xv. 131.
- Prince, Mr., of Boston, cited, xxvi. 70 n.
- Printing, invention of, viii. 263; consequences of, xii. 194.
- Prinzen, xxi. 441.
- Prinzenraub, the, xi. 255-293; Little Albert of the, xxi. 315.
- Priort, xxiii. 174, 261.
- Prison, Abbaye, refractory members sent to, iii. 295; Temple, Louis sent to, 376, Abbaye, Priests killed near, iv. 36 (see Abbaye); La Force, massacres at, 37, 43-47; at Châtelet, and Conciergerie, 37-40.
- Prisons, Paris, in Bastille time, ii. 225; full (August 1792), iv. 23; number of in Paris and in France, 266; state of, in Terror, 335-338; thinned after Terror, 359.
- Prittitz, Captain, saves the King at Kunersdorf, xxviii. 227; mentioned also, xxx. 212.
- Prittitz, Silesian magnate, xxv. 95.
- Private judgment, xii. 147.
- Probst, Lieutenant, xxx. 282.
- Procession, of States-General Deputies, ii. 167; of Necker and D'Orléans busts, 218; of Louis to Paris (October), 356-359; again, after Varennes, iii. 230, of Black Breeches, 320-324; of Louis to Trial, iv. 117; at Constitution of 1793, 227.
- Proclamation by Cromwell, 1648, xv. 63; after Dunbar fight, xvi. 45; Edinburgh, 80.
- Professions, the learned, hateful, not lovable, xx. 47.
- Progress of the species, xii. 140.
- Proly, Jacobin missionary, iv. 174.
- Promethean conquests, xxi. 247.
- Prometheus, xxviii. 392.
- Property, i. 192; what is, x. 376; none eternal but God the Maker's, 389.

Prophecy and prodigies, iii. 49.
 Prose, good, better than bad rhyme, ix. 209. See Poetry.
 Proselytising, i. 9, 284.
 Protestant Refugees, xxi. 310, 360; Protestant Germany, 334; 'enlightened Protestantism,' 396; xxii. 61; the Heidelberg Protestants, 39; Birthplace of Protestantism, 410; the Salzburg Protestants, xxiii. 25, 123; sympathy with Friedrich, xxv. 433; xxvi. 100, 154; Heroism, xxviii. 337. See Reformation.
 Protestantism, modern, vi. 152; the root of modern European History, xi. 146; not dead yet, 161; its living fruit, 168, 237; proper and *improper*, xix. 369.
 Protestants emancipated in France, ii. 112, 119.
 Protestation of Commons, 1641, xiv. 119; and *App.* xviii. 180-183.
 Provence Noblesse expel Mirabeau, ii. 155.
 Prudhomme, Editor, iii. 35; on assassins, 146; turncoat, iv. 277; on Cavaignac, 294 n.
 Prussia, early condition of, xxi. 79; a vehemently Heathen Country, 80; attempts at conversion, 81; brought to terms by the Teutsch Ritters, 117, 161; West Prussen cut away by the Polish sword, 217; how East Prussen came into the Hohenzollern Family, 252; *Mitbelehrung*, 288; a troublesome Aristocracy, 300; tamed down by George Friedrich, 306, possessions in the Rhine Country, 332, 356; freed from Homage to Poland, 357, 358; invaded by the Swedes, 363; Kingdom of Prussia contrasted with Westphalia, 378 (see Friedrich I.); dawning of a new day for Prussia, 409; xxii. 17; Salzburg Protestants in, xxiii. 129; population and revenue, xxiv. 36; preparedness for war, xxv. 381; discipline in storm of battle, xxvi. 92, 130; devoutness of heart, 154, 234; Prussia during ten years of peace, 185, 324, 327; the Nation of Teutschland, 186; Prussian Free-Corps, xxvii. 122; Prussia to be divided amongst the Great

Powers, 132; resources to meet the general attack; militias, xxviii. 14, 43; noble conduct of young recruits at Domstadt, 42; Prussian loyalty towards the King, 42; surrounded by enemies, 133, army becoming exhausted, 133, exchequer ditto, 137; Prussian expenditure of life on the Seven-Years War, xxix. 336; Fire-Baptism, and rank among the Nations, 340; the Prussian Clio, 353; what Prussia owes to its Hohenzollern Kings, 355; ruined condition at close of the war, 360-372; dissatisfaction at Friedrich's Excise-system, 377-383; acquisition of West-Prussen, xxx. 47, 55, 58. See Brandenburg.
 Prussia, Fritz of, ii. 354; against France, iii. 283 (see Brunswick, Duke); army of, ravages France, iv. 15, 16; King of, and French Princes, 72.
 Prussia, Prince of. See August Wilhelm.
 Prussian Monarchy, founder of, xviii. 117 n.
 Pryne, William, first appearance of, xiv. 71; his *Histriomastix*, 71; in pillory, in 1633, 74; again in 1637, 96; speech in pillory, 96; purged by Pride, xv. 103; assists Dr. Hewit, xviii. 147.
 Public Opinion, force of, vii. 239, 339; xxv. 5.
 Publishing Societies, what they might do towards a real History of England, xi. 167.
 Pückler, Reichsgraf, and Colonel Mayer, xxvii. 188.
 Puebla, Excellency, xxvii. 8, 25.
 Pufendorf, cited, xxi. 326 n., 361 n.
 Puffery, the deluge of, ix. 258; all-deafening blast of, xiii. 177.
 Puisaye, Girondin General, iv. 206, 217; at Quiberon, 371.
 Pulawski, Fort, in Charleston Harbour, xxix. 437.
 Pulawskis, the Polish, and their efforts for Freedom, xxix. 436; defence of Cloister Czenstochow, 437, 438.
 Purgatory, noble Catholic conception of, xii. 113

- Puritan Revolution, the, xi. 307-8; Sermons, xiv. 10; history, 14; demands at Hampton-Court Conference, 39; characteristic, 53; leaders, 54.
- Puritanism, x. 393; founded by Knox, xii. 168; true beginning of America, 169; the one epoch of Scotland, 170, Theocracy, 178; Puritanism in England, 242, 245, 267; giving way to decent Formalism, xiii. 209; our last heroism, xiv. 3; faded, 10; Dryasdust on, 11; nature of, 80.
- Puritans, English and Scots, xiv. 106; become formidable, 117.
- Puseyism, xiii. 146, 364; xix. 194, 281; begotten by Coleridge from his own fantasies, xx. 73, 129.
- Putney Church, Army-meeting at, xiv. 298.
- Putrescence and social decay, ix. 337.
- Pütter, cited, xxii. 49 n.
- Pütter, Professor, talks with King Friedrich, xxix. 330.
- Puttkammer, General, escorts convoy, xxvii. 256; killed at Kunersdorf, xxviii. 225.
- Pym, John, xi. 139; a Puritan, xiv. 54; speech by, 61, lives at Chelsea, 121.
- Pytheas, xxi. 69, 80.
- QUACK, unforgivable, iii. 179.
- Quackery, portentous age of, ix. 336; dishonesty the raw material alike of Quackery and Dupery, 339; deception and self-deception, 364, 370; portentous age of, x. 362; Quacks and dupes, xii. 256; and sham-heroes, xiii. 33, 103, 177, 185, 277; originates nothing, xii. 7, 53; age of, 206.
- Quadi, the, xxiv. 171.
- Quadt, Colonel, assists in losing Glatz, xxix. 36.
- Quakerism, germ of, xv. 139.
- Quaker's, a manufacturing, care for his workmen, xiii. 343, 361.
- Quakers, first Scotch, xvi. 122. See Fox, Naylor, Penn.
- Quandt, preaches before King Friedrich, xxiv. 46.
- Quantz, the Saxon Music-master, xxii. 303; xxvi. 189, 242; his death, xxx. 120.
- Quast, Kriegrath von, xxx. 287, 288.
- Quebec, besieged by General Wolfe, xxviii. 198, 199, captured, 303-306; decision that America is to be English and not French, 309.
- Quedlinburg, xxiv. 49.
- Queen of Charles I., doings by, xiv. 147.
- Queen of France, Stanislaus's daughter becomes, xxiii. 200, 208; xxiv. 244, 246.
- Queen Regnant, xxvi. 375. See Elizabeth Christina of Brunswick-Bevern.
- Queen Mother. See Sophie Dorothee.
- Queen. See Antoinette, Marie.
- Queens, the average of, xxiii. 342.
- Quéret-Démery, prisoner in Bastille, ii. 245.
- Queries to Edinburgh clergy, xvi. 78; of Scotch Western Army, 92.
- Quiberon, debarkation at, iv. 371.
- Quietest, the greatest by nature also the, x. 243. See Silence, Wholeness.
- Quintus Icilius, otherwise Guichard, xxvii. 191; with Friedrich at Breslau, xxviii. 4; how he got his new name, 160, 161; sketch of his career, 162, 163; xxix. 12, at siege of Dresden, 29; in Leipzig, 107, 149; his respect for Gellert, 153; brings him to the King, 154, 156, 158; undertakes the sacking of Hubertsburg, 162, 336; with Prince Henri in Saxony, 256; his troops paid off at close of the war, 335; his death, xxx. 120: mentioned also, 74 n.
- Quitow, Dietrich von, xxi. 208.
- Quixote, Don, xxix. 136.
- RABAUT, St. Etienne, French Reformer, ii. 177; in Commission of Twelve, iv. 191, hides between two walls, 222; guillotined, 265.
- Rabenau, Rattmeister, xxix. 232, 233.
- Rabener of Berlin, xxix. 154.
- Racine's *Athalie*, Friedrich's high opinion of, xxix. 376.
- Racknitz, Countess, xxvi. 178.
- Radewitz, Camp of, xxii. 335, 376.
- Radicalism, speculative, i. 14, 28, 62; parliamentary, x. 402; paralytic, 409; Sterling's early, xx. 43, 60; tottering for him, and threatening

- to crumble, 76; fallen to wreck, 111; the opposite extreme, 129.
- Radom, Confederation of, xxix. 429, 431.
- Radzivil, Prince, at Radom, xxix. 429-431.
- Radzivil, Princess, elopes with Karl Philip, xxii. 42.
- Ragland Castle besieged, xiv. 263; surrenders, 255.
- Ragnarok, xii. 45.
- Rahel Varnhagen von Ense. See Ense.
- Railway Promoters, xi. 377.
- Railways, how, are shifting all towns of Britain into new places, xix. 320; stupendous railway miracles, 334.
- Rainsborough, Col., at Bristol siege, xiv. 234; deserted by the Fleet, xv. 17; assassinated, 83.
- Raleigh, Sir Walter, his fine mantle, i. 46; execution of, xiv. 47; History, Cromwell's opinion of, xv. 293.
- Ramadhan, the English, xix. 355.
- Rambonet, employed in the Herstal Affair, xxiv. 93, 95, 101, 107.
- Ram-dass the Hindoo man-god, x. 229.
- Rameau, xxvi. 201.
- Ramen betrays Queen Sophie Dorothee's confidence, xxii. 317, 322.
- Ramin, Governor of Berlin, xxx. 81, 180.
- Ramrods, iron, xxi. 403.
- Ramsay, Rev. Robert, preaches before Cromwell, xvi. 147.
- Ramsay, Chevalier, xxiv. 254.
- Ranft, cited, xxii. 457 n.
- Ranke, xxv. 26, 342; xxvi. 43, 53, 109; cited, xxv. 342 n., 353 n., 417 n.; xxvii. 134 n.
- Rannsleben, Judge, and the Miller-Arnold case, xxx. 188-201.
- Rasfeld, xxiv. 94; Prussian Ambassador in Holland, xxv. 19, 25.
- Rasomowski, Count, xxix. 283.
- Rastadt, xxi. 381.
- Rathenau, xxi. 362.
- Rathenow's, Captain von, interview with Friedrich, xxx. 280, 281.
- Ratibor, xxi. 242, 293.
- Raumer, cited, xxiv. 179 n.; xxv. 40 n.; xxvi. 113 n.
- Rauter, General, at Zorndorf, xxviii. 74.
- Ravallac, xxi. 321.
- Rawlins, Captain of Parliament horse, xiv. 217.
- Raynal, Abbé, Philosophe, ii. 69; his letter to Constituent Assembly, 291, xxx. 236.
- Read, what it is to, an author, vi. 175, 294; vii. 249, 304; xi. 38.
- Readers, good, xi. 303.
- Ready-Reckoner, strange state of our, xiii. 204.
- Real, the, always respectable, xix. 349.
- Reality, deep significance of, ix. 9, 15, 230, 389; x. 9, 76; xi. 232; worth of, xxi. 415. See Fact.
- Reason, Goddess of, iv. 282-284. See Feast.
- Rebecca, the, boarded by the Spaniards, xxiii. 34.
- Rebecqui, of Marseilles, iii. 270; in National Convention, iv. 63; against Robespierre ('*Mor*'), 95; retires, 158; drowns himself, 216.
- Rebeur, President von, xxx. 190.
- Recruiters, new Members of Parliament, xiv. 255.
- Redbank, fight at, xv. 28. See Preston.
- Reding, Swiss, massacred, iv. 42.
- Reece, Mr., Sterling's early schoolmaster, xx. 26, 29.
- Reform, viii. 226; not joyous but grievous, xi. 117; Ministries, Benthamite, x. 405; strange meaning of the new Reform measure, xi. 348-50; like Charity, must begin at home, xiii. 43, poor old Genius of, xix. 84; administrative, xxi. 408. See Administrative Reform, Downing Street.
- Reformation, era of the, viii. 226; in Scotland, ix. 47; the Markgraf George in the great business of, xxi. 243, the Event of the Sixteenth Century, 269, 286; fatal consequences of rejecting, 272; symptoms of the Thirty-Years War, 318; George Wilhelm's perplexities, 333.
- Reformer, the true, xii. 137; xiv. 82.
- Rège, Major de, killed at Ottmachau, xxiv. 227, 230.
- Regensberg, xxiv. 277; xxv. 282.
- Rehback, Jakob, xxi. 164.
- Reichartsbronn, Abbey of, xxi. 123.
- Reichenbach, xxi. 318; his Cipher-

- Correspondence with Grumkow, 346, 354, 360; his recall, 368.
- Reichenbach, battle of, xxix. 307-310.
- Reichenberg, battle of, xxvii. 148, 149.
- Reichs-Kammergericht, xxiv. 107; Holy Roman Reich, 346, 362; Reich thunder, xxvii. 118, 187, 205; Execution Army to be got on foot, 140, 246; *Citatio Fiscalis*, 321, 322; Army all gone to wreck, 345; placed under command of Zweibrück, xxviii. 34; in Saxony, 82, 83, tries to capture Leipzig and Torgau, 117; driven from Erfurt, 146; chased by Prince Henri, 152; again enters Saxony, 249, 256; at Maxen, 320; repulsed by Hülßen, xxix. 78; has temporary possession of Saxony, 102; rapidly retreats before Friedrich, 105; driven from Leipzig, 107; makes its exit from the world, 328.
- Reid, Dr., vii. 274.
- Reinbeck, Herr, writes to Wolf, xxiv. 14.
- Reinhart, Count, xxviii. 348.
- Reinsberg, xxiii. 81, 191, 282; Friedrich's Mansion at, 281, 285; given to Prince Henri, xxx. 277.
- Reklam, Herr, Berlin Jeweller, xxvi. 302.
- Religion, dead letter and living spirit of, i. 114; weaving new vestures, 208, 266; Christian, and French Revolution, iv. 255; abolished (*Curé Parens*, Revolutionary Army), 278-281; Cloutz on, 279; a new, 282, 330; utilitarian, vi. 253; vii. 336, heroic idea of, viii. 28; self-conscious, 353; how to teach, x. 413; a man's, the chief fact with regard to him, xii. 4; based on Hero-worship, 14; propagating by the sword, 72; cannot succeed by being 'easy,' 83; a great heaven-high Unquestionability, xiii. 76, 84, 145; gone, 171; all true work is, 250; foolish craving for a 'new,' 280, 287; inner light of a man's soul, xiii. 281; xix. 398; not the many things a man tries to believe, but the few he cannot doubt, xix. 376, cannot be made up of doubts, xx. 118, 130; teaching, xxii. 61. See Christian, Church, Clergy, Education, Prayer, Priests, Worship.
- Rembrandt, xxix. 336.
- Remonstrance, against Buckingham, xiv. 63; against Land, 66; and Petition of Ministers, 108; Grand, of Long Parliament, 121; of Scotch Western Army, xvi. 91, 97, 101.
- Remy, Cornet, at Clermont, iii. 219.
- Rénault, Cécile, to assassinate Robespierre, iv. 328; guillotined, 334.
- Réné, King, bequeathed Avignon to the Pope, iii. 264.
- Renner, the. See Hugo von Trimberg.
- Rennes, riot in, ii. 129.
- Rentsch, cited, xxi. 100 n.
- Rentzel, xxii. 22; xxx. 154 n.
- Renunciation, the beginning of Life, vii. 265; one harmonious element of the highest, ix. 298.
- Renwick, last of Cameronians, iv. 151.
- Repaire, Tardivet du, Bodyguard (Fifth October), ii. 347; rewarded, iii. 151.
- Repentance, sacredness of, xix. 363.
- Repin, Prince, xxvi. 220; at Congress of Teschen, xxx. 172.
- Representation, double, of Tiers Etat, ii. 149.
- Representative, Hereditary, iii. 148. See Louis.
- Representatives, Paris, Town, ii. 289 (see Club, Electoral). Convention,—see Commissioners.
- Republic, French, first mention of, iii. 208; first year of, iv. 62, 229; established, 75, 85; universal (Cloutz's), 99; Girondin, 173; one and indivisible, 185, its triumphs, 368-372.
- Republic of Literature, vi. 236. See Literary Men, Literature.
- Republics, ancient and modern, xix. 23.
- Resolutioner, Protester, xvi. 102, 123.
- Respectability, ix. 317; baleful influence of, x. 5, 221; how generated, 86. See Gigmanity.
- Resson, Sieur, reports Lafayette to Jacobins, iii. 328.
- Retzow, Colonel, at Pardubitz, xxv. 194; on commencement of Seven-Years War, xxvii. 49, 50; on battle of Prag, 175, 176; Friedrich's speech

- before Leuthen, 373; on Zorndorf, xxviii. 67; Hochkirch, 99, 110, Prussian army losing its best men, 133, 298: cited also, xxiv. 262 n.; xxvii. 7 n., 176 n.; xxix. 27.
- Retzow, Major-General, in conference with Friedrich, xxvii. 48, 50; under Prince of Prussia, 254; Leuthen, 381, 397; at Leutomischl with Fouquet, xxviii. 45; at Hochkirch, 90; put under momentary arrest, 92; occupies Weissenberg, 95, 96, 107; in battle of Hochkirch, 108, 109; death at Schweidnitz, 116.
- Reusch, Colonel, at Tein Bridge, xxv. 424.
- Reuss, Counts von, xxi. 129.
- Reuss, Graf von, at Versailles, xxiv. 242, 253.
- Réveillon, first balloon at house of, i. 62; house beset, destroyed, 161, 162.
- Revenge, duty of, x. 356; mournful twaddle about, xix. 88; sacred duty of, 94.
- Reverence, early growth of, i. 99; indispensability of, 242; worth of, vi. 276; not sycophancy, ix. 41, 204; need of enlightenment, 121; reverence for the Highest, in ourselves and in others, 312; our want of, xi. 188; xix. 312, Goethe on, xi. 325; what it means, xxv. 420.
- Review-articles, xxi. 122. See Literature.
- Reviewers, duty of, vii. 161; two methods of what is called reviewing, 253; viii. 355; the trade well-nigh done, 289; Smelfungus's despair, ix. 177. See Read.
- Revolt, Paris in, ii. 224; of Gardes Françaises, 226; becomes Revolution, 247; military, what, iii. 92; of Lepelletier section, iv. 394-397.
- Revolution, French, causes of the, ii. 15, 44, 71, 120, Lord Chesterfield on, 17; not a Revolt, 247; meaning of the term, 263; whence it grew, 265; general commencement of, 282; editors, 291; prosperous characters in, iii. 25; Philosophes and, 32; state of army in, 93; progress of, 130, 139; duelling in, 143; Republic de-
- cided on, 206; European powers and, 282-285; Royalist opinion of, 286; cardinal movements in, iv. 7; Danton and the, 59; changes produced by the, 85; and Atheism, 123; effect of King's death on, 145-147; Girondin idea of, 156, 172; suspicion in, 193; like Saturn, 250; Terror and, 253; and Christian religion, 255; Revolutionary Committees, 175, 239, 266; Government doings in, 300; Robespierre essential to, 357; end of, 397; a European, rapidly proceeding, ix. 123; English, our great, xi. 36, 139; Civil-War Pamphlets, 141, 142; Pride's purge, 165; French, meaning of the, vii. 341; masses of Quackism set fire to, ix. 340; a greater work never done by men so small, x. 103; the Event of these modern ages, 187; Parliamentary History of, 187-210; Thiers's History, Mignet's, and others, 189; curious collections of revolutionary books, pamphlets, &c., 194; death of Foulon, 197; the Palais-Royal, white and black Cockades, the Insurrection of Women, 200; the Jacobins' Club, in its early days of moral-sublime, 203; the September Massacre, 206; the South-American and set of Revolutions, xi. 69; history of the French, xii. 235, 237, 279.
- Revolutionary Horologe, xx. 78.
- Reward and Punishment, xix. 90, 96.
- Reynard the Fox, Apologue of, viii. 215; researches into its origin, 265; analysis of, 270, an extract, showing the language of our old Saxon Fatherland, 276.
- Reynolds, Col., at Ferns, xv. 185; surprises Carrick, 221, 222; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23; assists the French, xviii. 34, 84, 89; death of, 96.
- Reynolds's Portrait of Lord Granby, xxx. 46.
- Rhadamanthus, not so well informed as he might be, xxii. 476; his post long vacant, xx. 298.
- Rheims, in September Massacre, iv. 57.

- Rhenitz of Dresden, xxvi. 445.
 Rhyn, the, a little river near Reinsberg, xxiii. 283; xxx. 276.
 Ribble Bridge, fight at, xv. 25. See Preston.
 Rich, Col., in Scotland, xvi. 166, 168.
 Rich, Mr., and Frances Cromwell, xvii. 191-194; xviii. 98; death of, 160.
 Richard Cœur-de-Lion and the Siege of Acre, xxi. 112, 122.
 Richard of Cornwall, sham Kaiser, xxi. 132, 135.
 Richardson's clearness of sight, vii. 24.
 Richardson's account of Prince Henri's visit to Petersburg, xxx. 39-42: cited, 3.
 Richelieu, at death of Louis XV., ii. 20, 28; death of, 141.
 Richelieu, Duc de, xxvi. 67, 205; takes Minorca, xxvii. 39, 40, 248; supersedes D'Estrées, 269, 277, 282; one of the most magnificent marauders, 278, 295; Letter from Friedrich, 281; Convention of Kloster-Zeven, 283, 284, superseded by Prince de Clermont, 351.
 Richmond, Duke, present to, xiv. 312
 Richter, Jean Paul Friedrich, i. 31; vi. 3-29; leading events of his life, 9, his multifarious works, 12; extract from Quintus Fixlein, 28; poverty, vii. 66; brief sketch of his life and writings, 354, J. P. F. Richter again, vii. 3-75; his peculiar style, 4; a true literary man, heroic and devout, 7; interesting fragment of Autobiography, 10; birth and pedigree, 12; his good Father and early home, 13; self-vision, 20; education and extreme poverty, 21; his first productions, 28, this too a Spartan Boy, 33; his Costume controversy, 34; dares to be poor, 39, triumphant success of *Hesperus*, 46; his marriage, 49; unwearied diligence, 50; blindness and death, 53; intellectual and literary character, 54; extracts, 61; on Daughter-full houses, 66; his vast Imagination, 68; his Dream of Atheism, 69; review of De Stael's 'Allemagne,' vii. 363; Varnhagen's pleasant visit to, x. 295; can escape out of hearsays, xii. 12.
 Ridicule not the test of truth, vii. 183.
 Ried, General, at Torgau, xxx. 115.
 Ruedesel, at Himmelskron, xxviii. 153.
 Riesbeck, cited, xxi. 104 n.; xxiii. 124 n.
 Right and Wrong infinitely different, ix. 79, 299; the question of, only the second question, 318; as Heaven is to Hell, xii. 89, 114; silent awful sense of, xix. 62, 400; dim oblivion of, 96.
 Rights, xxiv. 158; American Rights of Man, xxix. 349.
 Rights and Mights, x. 356; the final 'rights' of man an abstruse inquiry, 364. See Evil, Might.
 Riot, Paris, in May 1750, ii. 15; Corn-law (in 1775), 42; at Palais-de-Justice (1787), 108 (see Grenoble, Bearn, Rennes); triumphs, 139, 140; of Rue St. Antoine, 161-164; of July Fourteenth (1789), and Bastille, 219-247; at Strasburg, 285; Paris, on the veto, 299, Versailles Châteaueau, October Fifth (1789), 314-351; uses of, to National Assembly, iii. 24; Paris, on Nanci affair, 120; at De Castries' Hotel, no theft, 145; on flight of King's Aunts, 156; at Vincennes, 159, on King's proposed journey to St. Cloud, 188; in Champ-de-Mars, with sharp shot, 238; Avignon,—see Avignon; Birmingham,—see Birmingham; Paris, Twentieth June (1792), 323; August Tenth (1792), 356-376; Grain, iv. 99; Paris, at Théâtre de la Nation, 124; selling sugar, 148; of Thermidor (1794), 345-352; of Germinal (1795), 376; of Prairial, 381; final, of Vendémiaire, 394-401.
 Riots. See Apprentices.
 Riouffe, Girondin, iv. 219; to Bordeaux, 220; in prison, 236; on death of Girondins, 247; on Mme. Roland, 262.
 Ripon, Countess de Grey, and Viner, ancestor of the, xxiv. 382 n.
 Ripperda, Duke de, xxii. 119, 195, 260.
 Riquettas, the, ii. 171. See Mirabeau.
 Rutter, Doris, xxii. 476.
 Ravarol, staff of genus, iii. 278.
 Robber-Towers and Free-Towns of Germany, viii. 257.

- Robbers*, the, Schiller's play, v. 17; not an immoral work, 27; consequences to its author of its publication, 28; remodelled for the stage, 256.
- Robert de Montfort, xiii. 136.
- Robertson's History of Scotland, ix. 47.
- Robespierre, Maximilien, account of, ii. 176; derided in Constituent Assembly, 274; Jacobin, iii. 39, 141; incorruptible, on tip of left, 141; elected public accuser, 167; after King's flight, 207; at close of Assembly, 249; at Arras, position of, 251; plans in 1792, 290; chief priest of Jacobins, 303; invisible on August Tenth, 358; reappears, iv. 12; on September Massacre, 54, in National Convention, 63; accused by Girondins, 95; accused by Louvet, 110, acquitted, 111; on Mirabeau's bust, 114; at King's trial, 115, 129; Condorcet on, 164; at Queen's trial, 243, in Salut Committee, 287, and Paris Municipality, 288; embraces Danton, 312; Desmoulins and, 314; and Danton, 316; Danton on, at trial, 320; his three scoundrels, 320; supreme, 323; to be assassinated, 328; at Feast of Etre Suprême, 330-332; apocalyptic, Théot, 332, 339; on Couthon's plot-decree, 333; reserved, 340; his schemes, 340; fails in Convention, 342; applauded at Jacobins, 343; accused, 346; rescued, 347; at Town-hall, declared out of law, 348; half-killed, 351; guillotined, 352; essential to Revolution, 357; his scraggiest of prophetic discourses, x. 104; an atrabiliar Formula of a man, nearly two years Autocrat of France, 105; once an Advocate in Arras, xi. 123.
- Robespierre, Augustin, is decreed accused, iv. 346; fall of, guillotined, 351, 352.
- Robinson, Luke, sent to Charles I., xiv. 265; turncoat, xvii. 113.
- Robinson, Rev. Mr., Cromwell's letter to, xv. 113.
- Robinson, Sir Thomas, xxii. 251; xxiii. 36, 37, 168; difficulties at Vienna, xxv. 34, 39, 57, 63, 68; Audience of King Friedrich, 42; King refuses to see him, 69; Letter to Hyndford, 72; interview with Maria Theresa, xxvi. 112, 113; mentioned also, xxiv. 123, 187; xxv. 13, 97, 165; xxvi. 5, 365; xxvii. 202.
- Robison, Professor, xxviii. 304 n.
- Rochambeau, one of Four Generals, iii. 88; retires, 314.
- Roche-Aymon, Grand Almoner of Louis XV., ii. 19, 27: cited, xxx. 241 n.
- Rochefoucault, Duke de la, Liberal, ii. 180; President of Directory, iii. 331; killed, iv. 57.
- Rochester, Earl. See Wilmot.
- Rochow, Lieutenant-Colonel, xxii. 409, 422, 427; prevents Friedrich's Flight, 444, 465; Commandant of Berlin, xxvii. 319, xxix. 90.
- Rockingham, Marquis of, xxvi. 266.
- Roden, mentioned to the King by Duke Ferdinand, xxix. 365; royal dialogue with him, 366-368; second audience, and standing appointment, 369; xxx. 57 n.
- Rodenbeck, cited, xxi. 411 n.; xxii. 441 n.; xxiv. 12 n.; xxv. 424 n.; xxvii. 231 n.; xxix. 33 n.
- Rödenskjöld, Swedish Ambassador, xxv. 354.
- Roder, General, xxiii. 219.
- Rodney attacks Havre-de-Grace, xxviii. 179, 180.
- Rodolf II., Kaiser, xxi. 320, 322.
- Röederer, Syndic, Feuillant, iii. 320; 'Chronicle of Fifty Days,' 322; on Fédérés Ammunition, 355; dilemma at Tuileries (August Tenth), 357, 365.
- Roel, Lieutenant-General, xxvi. 161, 166.
- Roghill, xv. 262.
- Rohan, Cardinal, Diamond Necklace and, ii. 70; and Cagliostro, ix. 372; what he was, x. 20; how he bore his dismissal from Court, and what came of it, 27-94; and Voltaire, xxiii. 307; xxx. 270.
- Rohdich, Commandant, xxx. 267.
- Rohr, Captain, xxvii. 180.
- Rohwedel, xxiii. 13.
- Roi, M., xxvi. 202.
- Rokewood, Mr., xiii. 55.
- Roland, M., notice of, iii. 57; in Paris, 271; Minister (no buckles), 305; let-

- ter, and dismissal of, 316; recalled, 375; decline of, iv. 9; on September Massacres, 52; and Pache, 97; doings of, 98; resigns, 139; fled, 202; suicide of, 264.
- Roland, Madame, notice of, at Lyons, iii. 57; narrative by, 58; in Paris, after King's flight, 207; and Barbaroux, 271; public dinners and business, 305; character of, 305; misgivings of, iv. 98; accused, 125; Girondin declining, 164; arrested, 202; in prison, condemned, 262; guillotined, 263.
- Roland of Roncesvalles, x. 6.
- Rolf, Major, accused, xv. 47.
- Rollin, xxiii. 300.
- Roloff, Provost, xxiii. 409, 411.
- Roman Augurs, Cicero's, xix. 194; conquests, x. 358; xiii. 201; Emperors, era of the, vii. 237; Romans out, English in, x. 387; history, xi. 305-6, the Dictatorship, 309.
- Romance, Translations from German, Preface to, vi. 311; the age of Romance can never cease, x. 3; none ever seemed romantic to itself, 6.
- Romanzof sent by Soltikof to Daun, xxviii. 285.
- Romanzow besieges Colberg, xxix. 210-215, 236, sent against the Turks, 444; xxx. 28-32.
- Romanzow junior, xxx. 244.
- Rome, a tour to, in the twelfth century, xiii. 88; Sterling at, xx. 206, 214.
- Römer, General, at Mollwitz, xxiv. 315; killed, 320.
- Romme, in National Convention, iv. 63; in Caen prison, 207; his new Calendar, 229-231; in riot of Prairial (1795), 383; suicide, 385.
- Romœuf, pursues the King, iii. 209; at Varennes, 226.
- Ronsin, General of revolutionary army, iv. 267, 284; arrested, 310; guillotined, 314.
- Rootsby, Major, killed at Dunbar, xvi. 52.
- Roquefeuille, Admiral, xxv. 360, 362.
- Rose, Medicinal-Assessor, xxvi. 263.
- Rosière, Thuriot de la, summons Bastille, ii. 234; in First Parliament, iii. 258; in National Convention, iv. 122; President at Robespierre's fall, 346.
- Roskowski, symbolical Polish Nobleman, xxx. 56.
- Ross Town, besieged, xv. 200; taken, 206.
- Rossbach, battle of, xxi. 10; xxvii. 326; the country round, 332-335; Napoleon's opinion of, 347.
- Rossignol, in September Massacre, iv. 45; in La Vendée, 267.
- Rossold of Sangerhausen, xxvii. 359.
- Rostock, xxi. 341.
- Rotch, of Boston, loses his tea, xxx. 94, 95.
- Roth, Count von, xxiv. 185; defends Neisse, 234; Brunn, xxv. 154, 156.
- Roth, Lieutenant-General, taken prisoner at Freyberg, xxix. 324.
- Rothenburg, Count, and his French fashions, xxi. 430.
- Rothenburg, at Mollwitz, xxiv. 314, 324; at Chotusitz, xxv. 183, 187; dispatched to Paris, 343; sent with reinforcements to Prag, 433; at Hohenfriedberg, xxvi. 91; at Dresden, 172; much esteemed by Friedrich, 343, 344; his death, 351; mentioned also, xxii. 423; xxiv. 28, 254; xxv. 382, 440; xxvi. 145, 189, 222, 347.
- Roths, Earl, taken at Worcester, xvi. 179.
- Rothschloss, affair of, xxiv. 404.
- Rottembourg, Count de, properly von Rothenburg, xxiii. 249.
- Rottofreddo, battle of, xxvi. 200 n.
- Roucoulles, Dame de, xxi. 38, 393.
- Roucoux, battle of, xxvi. 198 n., 217.
- Rouillé, M. de, xxvii. 38.
- Rous, Sir Francis, and the Barebones Parliament, xi. 310.
- Rouse, Francis, Translator of the Psalms, xiv. 103; in Little Parliament, xvi. 230; Speaker of Little Parliament, 272; of Council of State, xvii. 8 n.; in Cromwell's First Parliament, 22; one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques, Contrat Social of, ii. 66; Gospel according to, iii. 47, 249; burial place of, 177; statue decreed to, 248, was half sage, half maniac, vii. 190, 221; ix. 9, 262; x.

- 384; xi. 96; not a strong man; his Portrait; egoism, xii. 217; his passionate appeals, 219; his Books, like himself, unhealthy; the Evangelist of the French Revolution, 220; unveiling himself, xxv. 50; is Legation Secretary, xxvii. 32; finds refuge with Lord Marischal, and writes to Friedrich, xxix. 392.
- Rousset, cited, xxvi. 114n.; xxix. 338n.
- Roux, M., 'Histoire Parlementaire,' iv. 255.
- Rovigo, Duc de, xxviii. 351.
- Rowe, Scoutmaster, character of, xv. 55.
- Royalists, Club of, extinguished, iii. 42; named 'blacks,' 144; duelling, 143-147; plot for King's flight (see Plot); pomards, 152, 162; staff of genius of, 278, 289; preparations at Coblenz, 284.
- Royalty, signs of, demolished, iii. 206, 375; abolished in France, iv. 75.
- Royou, King's friend, editor of 'Ami du Roi,' iii. 287.
- Royston, Rendezvous. See Army.
- Ruamps, Deputy, against Couthon, iv. 333.
- Rubezahl, xxv. 397; xxvii. 150.
- Rücker, Dr, of Frankfurt, xxvi. 406.
- Rudenskjold (or Rodenskjold) reveals Brühl's scheme to Friedrich, xxvi. 143: mentioned also, 222.
- Rüdiger von Manesse, cited, xxi. 142.
- Rudolf of Hapsburg, viii. 219; xxi. 120, 197; elected Kaiser, 134; humiliation of King Ottocar, 136; unlovely posterity, 147.
- Ruffer, citizen of Landshut, xxv. 99, 103.
- Rugen, Isle of, xxi. 445.
- Ruhl, notice of, iii. 258; in riot of Prairial, iv. 383; suicide, 384.
- Rulhière, M., cited, xxix. 271; his book on Poland, 400, 401, 417-422, 433.
- Rump, doings of the, xvi. 193-196; must be dissolved, 221; dismissed by Cromwell, 224.
- Rupert, Prince, his father dies, xiv. 72; plunderings of, in 1643, 132; nicknamed Robber, 169; relieves York, 192; routed at Marston Moor, 192; at Worcester, in 1645, 210; at Naseby battle, 222; at Bristol, 232; manner of his leaving Bristol, 241; quits England, 255; in Irish seas, xv. 212.
- Rupert, Kaiser Kur-Pfalz, xxi. 188, 197.
- Ruppin, xxiii. 80, 114, 281.
- Rushworth, John, in danger at Naseby, xiv. 223; Cromwell's letter to, 266; with Cromwell in Scotland, xvi. 11; reporter of Cromwell's Speech, xviii. 137.
- Rushworthian chaos, xiv. 12, 60; xvi. 11.
- Russel, Francis, Henry Cromwell's father-in-law, xiv. 195, 326, purged by Pride, xv. 113.
- Russian project of partition of Prussia, xxv. 25; Russians hued by England, xxvi. 220, 224; xxvii. 23; resolutions against Friedrich, 15, 27; share in the partitioning of Prussia, 133; invasion of Preussen, 244, 250, 295, 311; forcible possession, xxviii. 7; the regular Army shares the common horror felt against the Cossacks, 55; Russian soldiery, 60, 79, Russian Army in possession of Frankfurt, 204-205; the regular Russians civil and orderly, 204; their honourable treatment of Major Kleist, 233; joy at Petersburg for the victory of Kunersdorf, 234; Army threatens Silesia, xxix. 6, 7, 38; advances towards Neisse, to join London, 186, junction near Liegnitz, 187; Russian Grenadiers at Schweidnitz, 220, Russian obedience and steadfastness, 292, 419; satire on Prince Galitzin, 444; war with Turkey, xxx. 14, 27-32, Partition of Poland, 45-48.
- Russians, the silent, worth something, xiii. 198, 201; the Czar of Russia, 225.
- Rutowski, xxii. 219; xxv. 109, 112, 151, 153; xxvi. 139, 178; his grand scheme against King Friedrich, 142; is beaten at Kesselsdorf, 162-166; vanishes into Bohemia, 169; disastrous management at Pirna, xxviii. 100-103, 108-111.
- Ryswick, Peace of, xxii. 44.

- SA, Don Pantaleon, beheaded, xvii. 21.
 Saale River, xxvii. 328.
 Sabatier de Cabre, at Royal Session, ii. 114; arrested, 115; liberated, 119.
 Sachs, Hans, a literary contemporary of Luther, vi. 40.
 Sachsen-Gotha. See Gotha.
 Sachsen-Meiningen, Duchess of, xxiii. 72.
 Sack, Baron de, xxvii. 14.
 Sackville, Lord George, xxvi. 69; xxviii. 123 n.; in charge of Munster country, 149; disgraceful conduct at Minden, 193-198.
 Sadler, Adjutant, in Ireland, xv. 287.
 Sadler, John, Cromwell's letter to, offering him Chief Justiceship in Munster, xviii. 234.
 Saffron Walden. See Army.
 Sahara, desert, iv. 7.
 Sahay, skirmish of, xxv. 191.
 St. Abb's Head described, xvi. 34.
 St. Albans, Commission of Array at, xiv. 137. See Army.
 St. Antoine (see Riot), to Versailles, ii. 322, 323; War-horse supper, 336; closes shops (Nanci affair), iii. 108; at Vincennes, 159; at Jacobins, 312; and Marseillaise, 349; August Tenth, 364.
 St. Cloud, Louis prohibited from, iii. 188.
 St. Denis, Mayor of, hanged, ii. 269.
 St. Domingo, Insurrection in, iii. 17, 272.
 St. Fagan's, fight at, xv. 4.
 St. Fargeau, Lepelletier, in National Convention, iv. 65; at King's trial, 129; assassinated, 133; burial of, 139.
 St. George's Hill, Levellers at, xv. 138.
 St. Huruge, Marquis, cracked, ii. 252; bull-voice, 293; imprisoned, 300, at Versailles, 330; and Pope's effigy, iii. 193; at Jacobins, 312, on King's trial, iv. 124.
 St. Ives described, xiv. 87, 88.
 St. James's Fields, scene in, xiv. 297; House, bestowed on Cromwell, xv. 266.
 St. John, Oliver, character of, xiv. 98; xv. 44; related to Cromwell, xiv. 100; is Solicitor-General, 110; Cromwell's letters to, 172; xv. 45; with Cromwell at Aylesbury, xvi. 182; character of, 194; at Conference at Speaker's, 200-203; ambassador to Holland, 207.
 St. John, Mrs., Cromwell's letter to, xiv. 100.
 St. Johnston (Perth) surrenders, xvi. 166.
 St. Just, in National Convention, iv. 63; on King's trial, 115; in Salut Committee, 287; at Strasburg, 290; repels Prussians, 296; on Revolution, 309; in Committee-room (Thermidor), 344; his report, 344; arrested, 346.
 St. Louis Church, States-General procession from, ii. 167.
 St. Marie. See Miomandre.
 St. Méard, Jourgniac de, in prison, iv. 22; his 'Agony' at La Force, 42-50.
 St. Menehould, alarms at, iii. 212, 214, 217; Prussians at, iv. 69.
 St. Méry, Moreau de, 3000 orders, ii. 246; prostrated, iii. 351.
 St. Neot's, fight at, xv. 15.
 St. Nicholas, Thomas, Cromwell's letter to, xv. 92; account of, 93.
 St. Pierre's 'Paul and Virginia,' ii. 74.
 Saint-Simonian Portent, the, xx. 56, 169.
 Sainte-Beuve, M., xxviii. 353 n.
 Saints, living Communion of, i. 238, 244; and Sinners, xiii. 68.
 Saldern, General-Adjutant, at Mollwitz, xxiv. 311; in battle of Liegnitz, xxix. 72; of Torgau, 127; dialogue with the King at Leipzig; refuses to act contrary to his honour and oath, 159-162; in favour with the King, 163.
 Salisbury, Levellers at, xv. 142; insurrection at, xvii. 129.
 Salles, Deputy, guillotined, iv. 249.
 Salm, regiment, at Nanci, iii. 99.
 Salmon, cited, xxii. 196 n.
 Saltpetre, digging for, iv. 292.
 Salut Publique. See Committee.
 Salzburg Protestants, the, Friedrich Wilhelm's interest in, xxiii. 25, 385; Emigration of, 123; the Salzburg Country, 124; xxv. 282; xxvi. 23.

Salzdahlum, xxiii. 185.

Salzwedel, xxi. 73, 76, 94.

Sam-Slicks, vagrant, homeless, rest nowhere, xiii 346.

Samson, Monk, teacher of the Novices, xiii. 77; his parentage, dream and dedication to St. Edmund, 87; sent to Rome, 88; home-tribulations, 90; silence, weariness, 93; though a servant of servants, his words all tell, 97; elected Abbot, 102; arrival at St. Edmundsbury, 105; getting to work, 108, 112; his favour for fit men, 117; not unmindful of kindness, 118; a just clear-hearted man, 119; hospitality and stoicism, 121; troubles and triumphs, 124; in Parliament, 131; practical devotion, 139; Bishop of Ely outwitted, 141; King Richard withstood, 143; zealous interest in the Crusades, 144; a glimpse of the Body of St. Edmund, 149, the culminating point of his existence, 155; contemporary of Albert the Bear, xxi. 99.

Samson Agonistes, xxi. 7.

Sandershausen, fight of, xxviii. 124 n.

Sanitary Reform, xiii. 326.

Sansculottism, apparition of, ii. 265; what it effects, 286; growth of, iii. 6, 22; at work, 18; origin of term, 152; and Royalty, 323; above theft, iv. 53; a fact, 62; French Nation and, 86; Revolutionary Tribunal and, 178; how it lives, 178; consummated, 253, 257, 276, 292; fall of, 357; last rising of, 380-384; death of, 386.

Sans-Souci, xxvi. 193-195; the *Neue Palais* of, xxix. 389-391, 394.

Santa Cruz, Blake beats Spanish at, xviii. 33.

Santerre, Brewer, notice of, ii. 170; at siege of Bastille, 238, at Tuileries, iii. 151; June Twentieth, 322; meets Marseillaise, 349, Commander of Guards, 362; how to relieve famine, iv. 100; at King's trial, 117; at King's execution, 136; fails in La Vendée, 233; St. Antoine disarmed, 384.

Sarcasm, the panoply of, i. 127.

Sardinia, King of, xxiii. 208-212; xxviii. 376; Victor Amadeus, xxiii. 64.

Sartor Resartus, genesis of, i. 9; its purpose, 258; Sterling's letter on, xx. 134.

Satan, Milton's, vii. 68.

Satanas, the true, that now is, xiii. 302; his Invisible-World, xxi. 450.

Saturn or Chronos, i. 126.

Sauerteig, on the significance of Reality, ix. 9; on Life, 311; on National suffering, 338; on the Eras of England, x. 386; on Reforming a Nation, xi. 117; on Nature, xiii. 35; our reverence for Death and for Life, 155; the real Hell of the English, 182; fashionable Wits, 189; symbolic influences of Washing, 289; on Pig-philosophy, xix. 379, on Ideal History, xxi. 21; on Purity in the relation of the Sexes, xxii. 223; on Friedrich and Voltaire, xxiii. 302; on Wars not memorable, xxiv. 342; on Diplomatic Veracity, xxv. 84.

Saul, Legationsrath von, xxvi. 444.

Saunders, Col., notice of, xv. 7; Cromwell's letter to, 7, in Scotland, xvi. 160, 166.

Sausse, M., Procureur of Varennes, iii. 222, scene at his house, 225; flies from Prussians, iv. 27.

Savage, the aboriginal, i. 37.

Savage, Mr., his *Compleat History of Germany*, xxi. 354 n.

Savonnières, M. de, Bodyguard (October Fifth), temper gives way, ii. 331.

Savoy, occupied by French, iv. 82; Passes, xxv. 232, 233.

Savoy, Duke, persecutor, xvi. 134.

Saxe, Chevalier de, xxv. 109, 128, 151, 158; waylays Einsiedel, 438, 439; mentioned also, xxvi. 179.

Saxe, Maréchal de, xi. 283; xxii. 229; xxiii. 73, 222; quarrels with Valori, xxv. 152; to command under the Young Pretender, 361; made Maréchal, 382; in the Netherlands, 388; xxvi. 15, 198, 216, 219; at siege of Tournay, 57; at Fontenoy. 58-68; nearly dead of dropsy, 68; marches upon Maestricht, 225; visits Friedrich at Sans-Souci, 231; diligent service of the Devil, and death, 282-84;

- favoured of the Devil, xxvii. 363 ; his reveries, xxx. 9 : mentioned also, xxv. 65, 82, 106, 108, 112, 124, 151, 153, 241, 273 ; xxvi. 179.
- Saxon Heptarchy, the, ix. 224 ; x. 387 ; its character, x. 350 ; race, 386-401 ; savage, xiii. 17.
- Saxon Switzerland, xxvii. 67-70, 106, 107.
- Saxony, Kings of, xi. 278, 280.
- Saxony, the Prussian Army marches through, xxv. 394, 398 ; Saxony's broken back, xxvi. 32, 34 ; antipathy to Friedrich, 31, 37, 88 ; in secret league with Austria, 32 ; the Saxon army at Striegau, 88, 91, 96 ; at Hennersdorf, 151, 152 ; a Nation governed by a Brühl, 161 ; Steuer-Scheine, 177 ; invaded by Friedrich, xxvii. 60 ; Saxon army blockaded in Pirna country, 66-77 ; gets out on dismal terms, 97-112 ; Capitulation of Struppen, 109, 110 ; Prussia takes possession, 116 ; the Saxon share in the proposed partitioning of Prussia, 132 ; resentment against Friedrich, 227, 230 ; forced contribution to the expenses of the war, xxviii. 139, 140.
- Saxony, Elector of, claims Cleve, xxi. 315, 323.
- Saxony, Kur-Prince of. See Friedrich Christian.
- Say and Sele, Lord, a Puritan, xiv. 54 ; in Church Commission, xvii. 10.
- Scarecrow, significance of the, i. 60.
- Sceptical goose-cackle, i. 66.
- Scepticism, the sourness of the new fruit of growing knowledge, viii. 372 ; the Sceptic's viaticum, ix. 284 ; a spiritual paralysis, xii. 201-209, 247 ; so rife in our day, xx. 6 ; French, xxi. 48. See Doubt.
- Schaffgotsch senior, xxiv. 216, 220.
- Schaffgotsch, Cardinal, of Breslau, xxiv. 219 ; xxvii. 370, 403.
- Schaper, cited, xxvii. 351 n.
- Schellenberg, xxi. 319 ; xxii. 425.
- Schenkendorf, General, in battle of Liegnitz, xxix. 67.
- Schidlo, toll of, xxvi. 177.
- Schilda, its absurd celebrity, xxix. 109.
- Schiller, Friedrich, born in Wurtemberg, v. 5 ; character and condition of his parents, 5, 6 ; boyish caprices and aspirations, 8 ; intended for the clerical profession, 9 ; first poetry, 10 ; the Duke of Wurtemberg's School, 11 ; intolerable constraint, 12-16 ; publication of the *Robbers*, 17, 25 ; consequent persecution, 28 ; is encouraged by Dalberg, 32 ; escapes from Stuttgart, 33 ; finds refuge at Bauerbach, 35 ; settles in Mannheim, 46 ; his lofty striving, 54 ; removes to Leipzig, 68 ; proposal of marriage, 69 ; goes to Dresden, 73 ; crowned with laurels, but without a home, 96 ; lyrical productions, 97 ; tires of fiction, 99 ; habits at Dresden, 102 ; visits Weimar, 104 ; meets the Fräulein Lengefeld, 105 ; first acquaintance with Goethe, 106 ; appointed Professor of History at Jena, 114 ; marriage, 115 ; study of History, 119 ; sickness, 125 ; influence of Kant, 129 ; epic projects, 140 ; returns to the Drama, 141 ; connection with Goethe, 144 ; visits his parents, 147 ; removes to Weimar, 178 ; enthusiastic reception of the *Maid of Orleans*, 199 ; his last sickness and death, 220 ; his personal aspect and mental gifts, 223 ; his Letters, 254 ; specimen of his historical style, 275 ; intends an Epic on Friedrich, xxi. 22, 24 ; and Duke of Wurtemberg, xxii. 159 ; ideal of the true Artist, vi. 67 ; perfection of pomp-prose, viii. 62 ; general survey of, 87-143 ; Correspondence with Goethe, 90 ; his cosmopolitanism, 93 ; his high aims, 97 ; literary life and struggles, 98 ; connection with Goethe, 111 ; illness and quiet heroism, 113 ; his character and mode of life, 118 ; intellectual gifts, 123 ; contrast between the *Robbers* and the *Maid of Orleans*, 130 ; *Song of the Alps*, 138 ; his philosophy, 140. See Madame de Staël.
- Schimmelmann, Herr, and his false Danish coining, xxix. 147.
- Schlecker, Advocate, xxx. 180.
- Schlegel, Friedrich, vii. 269 ; viii. 363.
- Schlegenberg, Count and Countess von, of Breslau, xxiv. 219, 221.
- Schleiermacher, x. 295.

- Schlesien, xxiv. 169; Historical Epochs of, 171, 192, provisions for the Prussian Army in, 200; reformations in, under Friedrich, xxv. 98, 208, 210; is guaranteed to Prussia, 198. See Silesia.
- Schlichting at Camp of Staudentz, xxvi. 134.
- Schlotzer, cited, xxvi. 220 n.
- Schlozer, cited, xxiii. 251 n.
- Schlubhut, hanged for theft, xxiii. 26, 412.
- Schmalkaldic War, the, xxi. 281, 296.
- Schmettau senior, in the Austrian service, xxiii. 249; ordered home to Prussia, xxiv. 28; sent to urge Karl Albert, xxv. 77; at scalade of Prag, 112; mission to the French, 391; could make nothing of it, 415, urges the Hanoverians, xxvii. 135; at Prag, 237; with Prince of Prussia, 254, 257; defends Dresden against Daun, xxviii. 117-120; letter from the King authorising capitulation, 231; outlooks becoming very grim, 257; does not receive the King's second letter promising relief, 258; summoned to surrender, 259; hot preparation for defence, 260; helpless uncertainty, and Council of War, 262; high-toned negotiations, 263; feeble haste and blindness to symptoms, 264; Dresden disastrously lost, 265; capitulation scandalously ill kept, 270-273; Schmettau's ill-fortune much pitied by all men, 273; his good Wife a constant sunshine to his declining days, 274.
- Schmettau junior, xxiii. 249; xxiv. 28; xxv. 154, 176; xxvi. 97; xxvii. 119, 263, xxviii. 275; xxix. 254; on the Bavarian War, xxx. 149: cited, xxvii. 254 n.; xxx. 149 n.
- Schmettau, Major Graf von, Landlord of Miller Arnold, xxx. 179, 180.
- Schmidt, Curatus, of Siebenhuben, xxix. 228, 229; curious disappearance from the upper world, 232.
- Schmidt, Hofrath, of Frankfurt, xxvi. 405; his Wife's treatment of Voltaire, 410.
- Schmidt, Lieutenant, in Sangerhausen, xxvii. 359.
- Schmidt, President, in Cleve, xxvii. 354.
- Schmucker, present during Zimmermann's interview with the King, xxx. 70-74.
- Schnüspel, the distinguished Novelist, xiii. 70.
- Scholl, cited, xxii. 45 n.; xxv. 26 n., 396 n.; xxvii. 137 n.
- Scholzke. See Ploschke.
- Schonfeld, Herr von, xxvi. 76.
- Schoning, Madam, xxiii. 53.
- Schoning, cited, xxviii. 110 n.; xxix. 6 n.
- Schönwitz, Christopher, xxiv. 311.
- School education, insignificance of, i. 101, 104; tin-kettle terrors and incitements, 103; need of Soul-Architects, 105.
- Schoolmasters, when useful, xix. 216.
- Schools, non-vocal, xi. 323; and vocal, 381-86.
- Schren, Magister, is insulted by the French, xxvii. 358.
- Schröck, xxv. 387.
- Schubart, Daniel, account of, v. 241, 265.
- Schuhmacher, Prussian Secretary, xxiv. 34, 305.
- Schulenburg, Fieldmarshal, xxii. 205; Lieutenant-General, 485, xxiii. 65, 150, 160, 219, 407; his account of Friedrich at Cüstrin, 51; pockets an affront, xxiv. 23, in the Silesian enterprise, 178; his dragoons, 275; at Mollwitz, 317; death, 319 mentioned also, xxviii. 299, xxx. 129.
- Schulenburg, Graf von, xxvii. 324.
- Schulze, David, butcher, xxv. 96.
- Schumacher, Danish Legation Secretary, xxix. 285.
- Schuwalofs, the, of Russia, xxvii. 28; xxix. 277.
- Schwartz, Monk, xxi. 169.
- Schwartzburg, Princess of, xxiii. 338, 340.
- Schwartzbergs, the, of Austria, xxi. 342.
- Schweidt, Margraves of, xxii. 35, 146, 235; xxiii. 22; the Mother Margravine, xxii. 323; xxiii. 22, 75; Heinrich, 121.
- Schweichelt, Hanoverian Excellency, xxv. 63.

Schweidnitz, besieged by the Austrians, xxvii. 366; capitulation, 367; recaptured by Friedrich, xxviii. 24, 25; suddenly captured by General Loudon, xxix. 216-221; retaken by Friedrich, 306-316.

Schweinfurt, xxi. 362.

Schwerin, Colonel von, xxii. 273, 295, 475; xxiii. 8; xxiv. 146, 178, 218; on march towards Liegnitz, 195, 198; sudden entry, 209, takes Ottmachau, 227; bombards Neisse, 236; to command in chief, 240; at Breslau, 278, 281; in Jägerndorf Country, 296, 299; at Mollwitz, 321, 324, 330; manages Breslau, xxv. 54, 95; entertains Bielfeld, 98; takes Olmütz, 123; Moravian Foray, 154; home in a huff, 163; on march to Prag, 397; takes Ziscaberg battery, 404; on march towards Austria, 410; quarrels with Leopold of Dessau, 414, takes Beneschau, 425; once more home in a huff, 429; lays down his plough again, xxvii. 43; in conference with Friedrich, 48; through the Glatz Mountains, for Bohemia, 66, 78; retires to Silesia, 114; on march to Prag, 144, 150; junction with the King, 154; battle of Prag, 162, expostulates with the King, 164; attacks the Austrian army, 167; desperate struggle, 167; 'On, my children!' 169; death, 169, 177, 179; monument near Sterbohol, 181, 182; statue in Berlin, xxviii. 113.

Schwerin, Reichsrath Graf von, xxx. 80.

Schwiebus, Circle of, xxi. 373.

Science, the Torch of, i. 3; the scientific head, 66.

Sciences, the, or Technologies, xxiii. 116.

Scot of Scotstarvet, notice of, xv. 63; xvi. 122 n.

Scotch metaphysics, vi. 92; vii. 321 (see Mechanical Philosophy); national character, x. 235; xi. 219; Covenanters, xiii. 278; Highlanders in Hanover, xxviii. 124; at Emsdorf, xxix. 43.

Scotland awakened into life by Knox,

xii. 170; destitution in, xiii. 5; united to England, xvi. 185.

Scots Committee of Estates, Cromwell's letters to, xv. 56, 64, 73; xvi. 88, 125; extinguished at Alyth, 184.

Scots affairs in 1637, xiv. 97; Covenant, 98; affairs in 1639, 104; motions of their Army, 106; Declaration and proceedings of, in England, 106; demands, 109; assist English Parliament, 174; Army enters England, 1644, 185; at Marston Moor, 192, 193; Commissioners and Cromwell, 206; Army returns home, 260; Negotiations concluded, 271; proclaim Charles II., xv. 198; assist Charles II., 230; their Covenant in 1650, xvi. 3, 4, 87, 88, call in Charles II., 5; prepare to repel Cromwell, 14; Army skirmishes with Cromwell, 17, 18; how officered, 19; their poverty &c. described, 24; their Covenant commented on by Cromwell, 26; skirmish with Cromwell, 30; routed at Dunbar, 43, 44; Clergy and Cromwell, 65, 80; Committee of Estates, Cromwell's letters to, xv. 56, 64, 73; xvi. 88, 125; divisions among, 86, 101; at Stirling, levying forces &c. 116; entrenched at Torwood, 154; invade England, 165, 169; routed at Worcester, 174-181; Cromwell's opinion of, xviii. 131.

Scots-Greys, Royal, xxv. 220, 288.

Scott, Sir Walter, x. 213-286; great man, or not a great man? 225; one of the *healthiest* of men, 231, 246; an old Borderer in new vesture, 233; early environment, 234; infancy and young manhood, 237; Metrical Romances, and worldly prosperity, 244, 250; his connection with the Ballantynes, 248; influence of Goethe, 252; the Author of Waverley, 255; not much as a letter-writer, 256; dinner with the Prince Regent, 257; birth-eve of a Waverley Novel, 259; life at Abbotsford, 261; literary value of the Waverley Novels, 270; extempore writing, 275; bankruptcy, 282; a lonely, brave, impoverished man, 283; on the Apennines, xiii. 345

Scott, Major Thomas, report by, xv.

- 111; Cromwell's letter to, 211; Republican, xvii. 10; does not sign the Recognition, 80; in Cromwell's Second Parliament, 204, 348; excluded, 254; death of, xviii. 112.
- Scoundrel is scoundrel, xix. 67, 72; not to be commanded by mere love, 68; supreme scoundrel, 289; hero and scoundrel now almost indistinguishable, 343.
- Scoundrelism, significance of, x. 85; one of the crowning summits of, xxi. 151.
- Scoutmaster, office of. See Rowe.
- Scroope, Col., pursues Scots, xv. 36.
- Sea-kings, the old, and Saxon Pirates, xix. 127.
- Seals, great, new, &c., xvi. 128, 129. See Commonwealth.
- Secchia, surprisal of the, xxiii. 211.
- Sèche's, Hérault de, in National Convention, iv. 88; hat on, leads Convention out, 201; and new Feast of Pikes, 226; arrested, 317; guillotined, 322.
- Séchelles, M. de, xxv. 125, 239, 243; xxvi. 15.
- Seckendorf, xxi. 420, 443, 454; arrives at Berlin, xxii. 180, 150 (see Grumkow); a stiff-backed, petrified, inscrutable old Intriguer, 158, 281, an offence to Queen Sophie, 189, 293; present at Friedrich's attempted Flight, 445, 453, 457; negotiates his Marriage, xxiii. 96; letter from Friedrich, 148; negotiates Friedrich Wilhelm's visit to the Kaiser, 149; the visit, 166; tries to resuscitate the Double-Marriage, 168, 186; a ride with the King, 174, 261; at the Rhine Campaign, 238, 258, 266; quits Berlin, 258; Commander-in-Chief against the Turks, 350; a prisoner in the Fortress of Grätz, 370; Commander of Bavarian forces, xxv. 226, 241, 245, 260, 267, 271; makes terms for himself, 273; Hungarian Majesty refuses to confirm them, 308; garrisons Philippsburg, 384; to sit on Prince Karl's skirts, 415; loudly blamed by the French, 417, 418; reconquers Bavaria, 417; reduced to nothing again, xxvi. 12, 14, 22, 39; as ill-treated as could be wished, 17; diplomatising, 25; in questionable capacity at Füssen, 42; cited, xxi. 278 n.; xxii. 154 n.; mentioned also, xxiv. 143; xxv. 141, 215.
- Seckendorf junior, xxiii. 259.
- Secrecy, benignant efficacies of, i. 211.
- Secret, the open, xii. 95.
- Sections of Paris, iv. 169; denounce Girondins, 191; Committee of, 191, 194, 237. See Paris.
- Sedan Municipals and Lafayette, iii. 377.
- Sedgwick, Major-Gen., in Jamaica, xvii. 162; in America, xviii. 278; death of, xvii. 171.
- Seehausen, xxiii. 139.
- Segebusch, cited, xxx. 203 n.
- Séjur, Comte de, xxv. 111, 119, 129, 149; xxvi. 14; at Pfaffenhofen, 41; xxx. 236; sees Friedrich, 248.
- Seid, Mahomet's slave and friend, xii. 69, 84.
- Seidlitz (or Seydlitz), Rittmeister, xxvi. 81; at Hohenfriedberg, 91; at Prag, xxvii. 155, 175; with Friedrich in Saxony, 280, 282, 288; frightens 'La Dauphine' out of Gotha, 292, 293; at Rossbach, 336, 339; plunges down upon 'La Dauphine,' 341, 344; is wounded, 349; at Zorndorf, beyond praise, xxviii. 70, 72; publicly thanked by the King, 76; Statue, in Berlin, 113; Kunersdorf, 216, 218, 223; seriously wounded, 224, ill at Berlin, 288; assists in defending Berlin, xxix. 90; with Prince Henri in Saxony, 185, 256; greatly distinguishes himself at Freyberg, 323-327; his visit to Gotha with the King, 330; his death, xxx. 120; the Achilles of the Prussians, 278.
- Seigneurs, French, obliged to fly, ii. 282; iii. 132.
- Selborne, Natural History of, ix. 20.
- Selchow, xxv. 163 n.
- Selden, John, imprisoned, xiv. 67.
- Self-activity, i. 27.
- Self-annihilation, i. 179; xix. 364.
- Self-forgetfulness, Werner's notion of, vi. 136; how good men practise it, vii. 64. See Renunciation.

- Self-interest, political systems founded on, vii. 238, 240, 326.
- Self-worship, ix. 122.
- Selfishness, xiii. 36, 41.
- Seligenstadt, xxv. 288.
- Selle, Dr., attends Friedrich in his last illness, xxx. 255, 269: cited, 256 n.
- Selwyn, George, xxvi. 365.
- Seneca our niceliest-proportioned half-and-half, ix. 284.
- Senning, Major von, xxii. 22; xxiii. 291.
- Senses, the outward and inward, ii. 7, 16.
- Sentimentalist, the barrenest of mortals, viii. 338; Goethe's opinion of him, ix. 150; puking and sprawling, x. 232.
- September,—see Massacre Septemberers, the, iv. 54.
- Serbelloni, beaten by Prince Henri, xxix. 256
- Sergeant, Agate, Engraver, in Committee, iv. 12; nicknamed 'Agate,' 53; signs circular, 57.
- Serle, Daniel, Governor of Barbadoes, xvii. 162; Cromwell's letter to, 166.
- Servan, War-Minister, iii. 304, 309; plans of, 314
- Servants 'hired for life,' xi. 193, 205.
- Servantship, nomadic and permanent, xi. 344.
- Seven-Years War, results of the, xxix. 329-342.
- Seventy-four, an English, and its inarticulate traditions, xix. 127.
- Seville, Treaty of, xxi. 252, xxiii. 35.
- Sèvres Potteries, Lamotte's 'Mémoires' burnt at, iii. 295.
- Sewster, Robina, family of, xiv. 278; married to Lockhart, xviii. 90.
- Sexby, Edward, Trooper, examined, xiv. 285; 100*l.* voted to, xv. 38; his plottings, xvii. 129, 196, 226, 266; his death, xviii. 98.
- Sexton's Daughter*, Sterling's, xx. 172; still in the shadows of the surplice, 177.
- Seyfarth, cited, xxiii. 231 n., 413 n.; xxiv. 189 n., 308 n.; xxv. 396 n.; xxvii. 274 n.; xxix. 15 n.
- Shakspeare, Schiller's first impression of, v. 14; and the Elizabethan Era, xii. 119; his all-sufficing intellect, 121, 124; his Characters, 122; his Dramas a part of Nature herself, 126; his joyful tranquillity and overflowing love of laughter, 127; his hearty patriotism, 129; glimpses of the world that was in him, 129; a heaven-sent Light-Bringer, 131; a King of Saxondom, 133; his humour, vi. 21, no sectarian, 290; depth of insight, 298, ix. 167; bombast, vii. 16; Novalis's thoughts on him, 294; good taste, viii. 167, compared with Goethe, ix. 167; his education, 184; compared with Scott, x. 249; not an easy writer, 277, beautiful human soul, 393; what he might have made of the History of England, xi. 367; scattered tones of a National Epos, xix. 391; his death, xiv. 42.
- Shame, divine, mysterious growth of, i. 39; the soil of all virtue, 212.
- Shams, utter damnability of, xix. 16, 27; hatefulness of, xxii. 3.
- Sheep, significant resemblances between men and, ix. 52, 117; x. 214.
- Sheffield Assassination Company Limited, xi. 344, 377.
- Shekinah, Man the true, xii. 13.
- Shelley, viii. 363.
- Sherland, Parson, apprehended, xvii. 174.
- Sherlock's, Reverend Mr., account of his visit to Voltaire, xxx. 99-105; visits Berlin, 122. cited, 100 n.
- Shulbourn, Colonel, in Ireland, xv. 283.
- Shipmoney, Writ of, xiv. 74. See Hampden.
- Sibylla, Wife of Johann Friedrich, xxi. 303, 314.
- Sicard, Abbé, in prison, iv. 22; in danger near the Abbaye, 36; account of massacre there, 46.
- Sicilian Insurrection, xix. 6; Vespers, xxi. 133.
- Side, Right and Left, of Constituent Assembly, ii. 273; iii. 18, 19; Tip of Left, Jacobins, 141; Right and Left in conflict, 142; Tip of Left, popular, 167; Right after King's flight, 204; Right quits Assembly, 244; Right and Left in first Parliament, 257; Delilah kiss, 261.

- Sidney, Col. Algernon, in Parliament Army, xiv. 217; in Rump Parliament, xvi. 222.
- Siegfried, the hero of old Northern Tradition, viii. 162, 173.
- Sieta, Col di, Pass of, xxvi. 218.
- Sieyes, Abbé, account of, ii. 179; Constitution-builder, 179, 267; iii. 10; in Champ-de-Mars, 71; in National Convention, iv. 63; of Constitution Committee (1790), 88; vote at King's trial, 129; making new Constitution, 393.
- Sigismund I., King of Poland, xxi. 255, 258, 288.
- Sigismund, Kurfürst of Brandenburg and King of Hungary, xxi. 179, 181, 183, 187, 197; becomes Kaiser, 190; Council of Constance, 191, 194, 239; how he pledged Zips to the Polish Crown, xxx. 36; referred to in the Bavarian-Succession War, 139.
- Silence, i. 173; the element in which all great things fashion themselves, 211; the grand epitome and sum-total of all harmony, viii. 346; out of, comes strength, ix. 51; significance and sacredness of, 293, 297; x. 218; the great empire of, xii. 118, 265; invaluable talent of, xiii. 120, 201, 298; unsounded depth of, 249, 251; two Silences of Eternity, 283; nature of, xiv. 7; excellent, or good *work* with lips closed, xix. 212; what silence means in the Nineteenth Century, 232; a life in silence, 252; silent work, and silent suffering, 255; greatness and fruitfulness of, xx. 236, value of, xxiii. 378; xxvi. 88.
- Silesia, Prussian claims on, xxi. 288, 350, 366, 373; xxii. 122; xxiii. 152; xxiv. 145; revenue of, in 1742, xxv. 211 n. See Schlesien.
- Silesian War, Thrd, sources of the, xxvii. 4.
- Silhouette, M. de, French Controller-General of Finance, xxviii. 131; suspension of payment, 346; Dictionary immortality, 348.
- Sillery, Marquis, notice of, iii. 32. See Genlis.
- Simes, Major, shot, xv. 283.
- Simon, Cordwainer, Dauphin committed to, iv. 326; guillotined, 352.
- Simon's, Saint, aphorism of the golden age, i. 229; a false application, 286.
- Simoneau, Mayor of Etampes, killed, ii. 273; festival for, 311.
- Simplon Pass, the, xx. 200.
- Sincere, with Daun at Maxen, xxviii 320, 323.
- Sincerity, the grand secret for finding readers, viii. 13; x. 249; the most precious of all attainments, viii. 322; ix. 188, 318; x. 363; xi. 35, 232; better than gracefulness, xii. 36; the first characteristic of heroism and originality, 54, 65, 149, 151, 185; deep awful divine quality of, xix. 372. See Original Man, Truthfulness, Wholeness.
- Sinclair, Major, xxiv. 265.
- Sinclair, Sir George, xxx. 213 n.
- Sundercomb, Miles, character and plot of, xvii. 266-268, poisons himself, 273.
- Sinnot, Col. David, Governor of Wexford, his negotiations with Cromwell, xv. 186-195.
- Sinzenhof, Hof-Kanzler Count von, xxiii. 159; xxiv. 219, 227, 236; xxv. 36, 97, 209.
- Shach, Jesus, xxix. 158.
- Skippon, Major-Gen., conveys Scots money, xiv. 273; in Council of State, xvii. 8 n., in Cromwell's First Parliament, 22, a Major-General, 155 n.; one of Cromwell's Lords, xviii. 101.
- Slave, etymology of, xxi. 71.
- Slavery of Wisdom to Folly the one intolerable sort, xi. 184; Question, Sterling's notions on the, xx. 131. See Negro Slaves.
- Slaves, authentic, to be treated as such, xix. 50, 299. See Mastership, Negro.
- Slave-trade, the, and how to suppress it, xi. 208.
- Sleep, curious to think of, x. 56.
- Slepe Hall described, xiv. 89.
- Sleswick thunder-horse badly ridden, xix. 123, 183.
- Shding-Scales, xiii. 223, 231. See Corn-Laws.

- Slingsby, Sir Henry, in arms, xvii. 129; plot and execution of, xviii. 145-147.
- Sluggard-and-Scoundrel Protection Society, xi. 172; xix. 80.
- Smectymnus pamphlets, xiv. 109.
- Smelungus on Tobacco-smoking, xxii. 167; on Modern Diplomacy, 393; on the Biographers of Voltaire, xxiii. 309; on Contemporary Influences, xxiv. 37; on Friedrich's Biographers, 40; on Maréchal de Saxe, xxvi. 232-234; on Voltaire as Friedrich's Supreme of Literature, 279; Editorial Ignorances about him, 332; Voltaire's Speech better than his Silence, 337, 351; La Beaumelle, 357-360; Abbé de Prades, 360; Voltaire's 'Dr. Akakia,' 390; end of his connection with Friedrich, 414; on Kaunitz and his Diplomacies, 421, 422; on Friedrich's Lamentation Psalms, xxvii. 297; the Prussian Dryasdust's treatment of Friedrich, 376, 377; an English Pottery Apotheosis, 407, 408; on old Marshal Münnich, xxix. 287; Pitt, xxx. 126, 127; Voltaire, 170.
- Smoke, advantage of consuming one's, i. 146.
- Smollett, Tobias, xxiv. 394; xxv. 236; horrors of the Carthagina Expedition, xxiv. 399: cited, 399 n.; xxvii. 21 n.
- Soap-and-water, gospel of, xxv. 189.
- Sobieski, King, xxii. 42.
- Societies, Printing. See Dryasdust.
- Society founded upon cloth, i. 49, 59, 62; how becomes possible, 208; social death, and new-birth, 209, 228, 236, 259; as good as extinct, 224; machine of, vii. 324, 334; miraculous power of association, vii. 340, a second all-embracing life, 341; wholeness and healthy unconsciousness, 344; burning-up of, ix. 232; vital lungs of, xix. 161, 222; no Society, but a lost horde, 341; Fraternelle, iv. 192.
- Sohr, country about, xxvi. 124, 128; battle of, 129-134.
- Soirées, Lion, the crowning phenomenon of modern civilisation, x. 213.
- Soissons, camp to be formed at, iii. 331; bread poisoned at, 347, Congress of, xxii. 250.
- Soldier, the, xiii. 321.
- Soldiers at sack of Basing, anecdotes of, xiv. 248.
- Solecisms, top-heavy, ii. 256.
- Solitude of soul, xxiii. 78; xxiv. 62, 132, 270: See Silence.
- Solltl, cited, xxi. 334 n.
- Solomon's Temple, xxvii. 378.
- Soltikof, General, prisoner at Zorndorf, xxviii. 81; placed over Fermor at Posen, 168; advancing towards Brandenburg, 170; battle of Zullichau, 174-177; marches towards Frankfurt, 178; seizes the town, 201-205; not an altogether bad man, 206; battle of Kunersdorf, 207, 213; a dearly-bought victory, 234; doubtful what next to do, 241; will not consent to do all the fighting for Austria, 245-248, 275; disgusted at Daun's inaction, 284; only terms on which he will continue the war, 285, intercepted by Friedrich, 291, 297; angry at Daun, 299; marches home in sulphurous humour, 301; prepares for a new campaign, 383; with Loudon, threatens Silesia, xxix. 38; consents to join Loudon at Breslau, 49; indignant at finding Loudon gone, and Prince Henri there, 52; will not be made a cat's-paw again, 59, 84; retires towards Poland, 81; falls sick, and is succeeded by Fermor, 89.
- Sombreuil, Governor of Hôtel des Invalides, ii. 229; examined, iii. 295; seized, iv. 22; saved by his daughter, 40; guillotined, 334; son of, shot, 371.
- Somers Tracts criticised, xiv. 76, 226 n.; xvii. 280.
- Somnauth, idol of, xix. 324.
- Songs and their influence, vii. 34; divine song, xi. 231.
- Sonsfeld, Madam, xxii. 90, 317, 460, 468; xxiii. 17.
- Sophie Albertine, Princess, xxx. 83.
- Sophie Charlotte, Friedrich's Grandmother, xxi. 33, 384; her love for Friedrich Wilhelm, 43, her death-bed, 44; she and her Mother shrewd,

- noticing, intelligent women, 47; her philosophical reunions, 48; her symbolic punch of snuff, 65.
- Sophie Dorothee, Friedrich's Mother, xxi. 33, 39, 383, 443; her husband's confidence in her, 442; xxii. 39, 146, 480; her reception of the Czarina Catherine, 7, 10; her love for Fritz, 68, 304; Double-Marriage scheme, 68, 81, 87, 129; her English pension, 85; secret correspondence with her poor Mother, 93, 192; unexpected birth of Princess Amelia, 93; surrounded by intrigues and treachery, 145; Seckendorf an offence to her, 189; difficulties becoming insuperable, 190; visit of August of Saxony, 228; persistence in the Double-Marriage scheme, 236, 266, 320; a pressing message from the King, 314, 321; her Female Parliament, 317; bed of sickness the one refuge left her, 322, 335; proposes Friedrich of Baireuth for Wilhelmina, 324; not a perfectly wise Mother, 327, Dr. Villa sent express to England, 329; joyful news about the Double-Marriage, 342; grievous disappointment, 372, 403, news of her Son's arrest, 459; receives his writing-desk from Katte, 460; delivers it to the King, filled with fictitious letters, 467; terror for her Son's life, xxiii. 9, will not give up the English Marriage, 16; anger at Wilhelmina, 20, 21, 24, 75, 79, 182, 228; her opinion of the Prince of Wales, 23; interest in the Salzburg Protestants, 140; contempt for her Son's bride, 183, 187, the King's death, 418; Queen Dowager, xxv. 213, 216; Friedrich's affection for, xxiv. 29; entertains Count Henkel, 30; receives Wilhelmina, 130; Demon News-writer's account of, xxvi. 375; her last visit from Friedrich, xxvii. 123, 127, letter from Friedrich, 184; death, 240: mentioned also, xxv. 213, 216; xxvi. 98, 137, 246, 266; xxvii. 183.
- Sophie Dorothee Maria, Friedrich's Sister, xxii. 96; xxiii. 220, 228.
- Sophie Dorothee of Hanover, xxi. 33; thirty-years imprisonment, 35; half-frantic in Castle of Ahlden, xxii. 83, 93, 192; her Will, 270.
- Sopnie, Electress, xxi. 34, 382; xxii. 82, 271.
- Sophie Frederike, Princess, of Anhalt-Zerbst, xxv. 352.
- Sophie Louisa, third Wife of King Friedrich I., xxi. 384; her dreary orthodoxy, 384; madness and death, 385.
- Sophocles, tragedies of, xi. 306.
- Sorbonne, the, decay of, ii. 13.
- Sorrows of Teufelsdröckh, pangs of self-deliverance, i. 146, 153, 155; divine depth of sorrow, 182; worship of, 185; xiii. 192; sanctuary of, vi. 283, vii. 233; x. 49; defined, xiv. 52.
- Soubise, Prince de, xxiv. 246, xxvi. 69; reinforces the Reichs Army, xxvii. 185, 248; pique against D'Estrées, 248; near Erfurt, 268; Merseburg, 326, 331; Rossbach, 338, 342, 343, to Nordhausen, 346; tries to assist Clermont against Ferdinand, 353; profligate rapacity of his Army, 355, to assist Contades, xxviii. 48, 123-125; seizes Frankfurt-on-Mayn, 144, 145; Invasion of England, 179, 344; to be co-General with Broglie, xxix. 200; quarrel and defeat at Vellinghausen, 202-205; Wilhelmsthal, 304; Amoneburg, 318.
- Soul and conscience, need for some, xiii. 32, 98, 237, 287; to save the expense of salt, 62; man has lost the *soul* out of him, 172, 191; a lost, xxiv. 355.
- Souls'-Overseers. See Bishops.
- South-Sea Island Queen, anecdote of, xv. 107.
- Southwark declares for Army, xiv. 298.
- Sovereignties, empty, xxv. 11. See Kings.
- Sower's Song, vi. 394.
- Space and Time, the Dream-Canvas upon which Life is imaged, i. 52, 64, 246, 251.
- Spaen, Lieutenant, xxii. 470, 475; xxiv. 26, 92; xxix. 369.
- Spain, against France, iii. 284; iv. 141; invaded by France, 294; alliance with, broken by England, xiv.

- 50; war with, 50; issue of, 51; war with, again, xvii. 161, 165, 195; reasons for, 208-213.
- Spandau, Commandant of, xxi. 352.
- Spanish-English controversy, xxvi. 227, 228; xxix. 209, 245-248, 322. See English, Don Blas.
- Spanish Refugees, xx. 77, 80, 104; Protestantism, xxi. 272; Spaniards in Holland, 316; in Cleve, 327, 331; Spanish quarrel with Karl VI., 11, 53 (see Elizabeth Farnese); ill-treatment of Captain Jenkins, xxiii. 33, 373.
- Sparrowbill and M'Pastehorn, xix. 81.
- Spartan wisdom, i. 222; humanity, xix. 49; an original North-German, xxi. 431, 434.
- Speak, ability to, no evidence of ability to work, xix. 139, 211, 235; speech and sham-speech, 211, 217, 233; eloquent unperformed speech, horrible, 220; human speech no longer true, 374. See Stump-Orator.
- Speaking, difference between, and public-speaking, ix. 362. See Conversation.
- Speculative intuition, i. 50. See German.
- Speech, great, but not greatest, i. 212; and jargon, difference between, xiii. 31; invention of articulate speech, 161; insincere speech, 189, the Speaking Man wandering terribly from the point, 301, Oliver Cromwell's first, xiv. 65; speech and the thing spoken, xxvii. 198, 199. See Silence.
- Speeches, how to read Cromwell's, xiv. 77; fragments of, against Earl Manchester and present Parliament commanders, 203-206.
- Speldhurst Laving, xvi. 269, 270.
- Spener, Herr T., xxv. 99; installation speech, 100, 104.
- Speyer, xxv. 385.
- Sphinx-riddle, the Universe a, i. 125; vii. 222; of Life, the, xiii. 10, 17; ours, 22.
- Spinelli, Conte di, xxv. 361.
- Spinning Dervishes, xiii. 319.
- Spiritual, the, parent of the Visible, viii. 220, 352; rudiments of a new era, 298, 323, 369, 393; ix. 298; parent and first-cause of the practical, xx. 356.
- Spittler, cited, xxii. 434 n.
- Spon, Baron de, xxvi. 241 n.
- Spörken, General, in Münster-country, xxviii. 149; Langensalza, xxix. 168.
- Sports, Book of, burned, xiv. 152.
- Spreeker, Captain, surrenders Breslau to Friedrich, xxvii. 403.
- Sprigge's *Anglia Rediviva*, xiv. 210 n.
- Spurs, Night of, iii. 226.
- Staal, Dame de, on liberty, iii. 34.
- Staal, Madame de, friend of Madame du Deffand, xxvi. 208.
- Stadion, Count, xxx. 67.
- Stael, Mme. de, at States-General procession, ii. 169; intrigues for Narbonne, iii. 280, 306; secretes Narbonne, iv. 14, 21; her 'Allemagne,' Richter's review of, vii. 363; Schiller, Goethe and, vii. 394.
- Stahremberg, Graf von, xxvii. 63.
- Stainville, Comte de, xxviii. 181; at Wilhelmsthal, xxix. 303.
- Stair, Lord, xxv. 7, 221, 274, 277, 363; at Dettingen, 286, 295.
- Stamford, Earl, defeated, xiv. 167.
- Stamford taken by Cromwell, xiv. 156.
- Stampach, General, at battle of Kolin, xxvii. 228.
- 'Standard set up,' Pamphlet, xvii. 297; xviii. 23, 27.
- Stande, xxiv. 42, 47.
- Stanhope and Price, their club and Paris, iii. 29.
- Stanislaus Leszczynski elected King of Poland, xxiii. 196, 199; flight from Dantzic, 225; protected by Friedrich Wilhelm, 238; visited by Crown-Prince Friedrich, 268; to be Titular King for life, 271; quits Königsberg for Dukedom of Lorraine, 273, his idle life and Titular Army, xxvi. 215; xxviii. 356, death, xxix. 395.
- Stanislaus, King. See Poniatowski.
- Stanley, Hans, Pitt's Envoy to Choiseul, xxix. 208.
- Stapleton, Bryan, notice of, xv. 55.
- Stapleton, Sir Philip, Presbyterian, xiv. 284; xv. 55. See Members, Eleven.
- Stapylton, Rev. Robert, xv. 55, 119;

- preaches in Edinburgh High Church, xvi. 85.
- Stars gone out, xx. 46, 117, 171.
- States-General, first mooted, ii. 97, 102, 112; meeting announced, 133; how constituted, 145 (see Estate, Third); one or three orders in? 149; kind of Representatives to, 150, Parlements against, 157; Deputies to, in Paris, 160; number of Deputies, 164; place of assembling, 165; procession of, 167-184; installed, 185; hats on, hats off, 186; union of orders? 192-199.
- Statistic Tables are beautifully reticulated, but hold no knowledge, x. 332; personal observation the only method, 334, 351.
- Statues, our Public, symbolic of our spiritual condition, xx. 303, 312, 318, 345, 349; how they are got up, 315; sculptural talent manifest in them, 317; how they ought to be put down, 348.
- Staudentz, camp of, xxvi. 128, 129.
- Steal, thou shalt not, x. 377.
- Stealing, i. 192, 221; generically includes the whole art of scoundrelism, ix. 327; xi. 39.
- Steinau, near Neisse, xxiv. 301.
- Steinfurth, xxii. 443.
- Stellter, Cabinets-Rath, xxx. 192.
- Stenzel, cited, xxi. 201 n.; xxiv. 30 n.; xxvi. 12 n.; xxvii. 132 n.; xxix. 9 n.
- Sterling, Anthony, born, xx. 15; early memories, 18; a steady, substantial boy, 33; enters a military life, 38; letter to, 57; at home on a visit, 173; meets his Brother in Italy, 222; quits the army, 307; at his Brother's dying bed, 319.
- Sterling, John, born in Isle of Bute, xx. 9; early life in Wales, 18; at Passy, 29; London, 31; runs away from home, 33; sent to Glasgow University, 37; life at Cambridge, 38; a secretaryship, 49; the Athenæum, 51; attendance on Coleridge, 65; his intimacy with the Barton family, 75, 80; connection with Torrijos, 79; engaged to Miss Barton, 86; Marriage, 90; illness, 91; at the Island of St. Vincent, 93, news of the Spanish Catastrophe, 104; returns to London, 113; meets Mr. Hare at Bonn, 115; Curate at Herstmonceux, 123; quits the Church, 128; life in London, 130; at Bayswater, 148; another serious illness, 163; at Bordeaux, 165; Madeira, 179; literary efforts, 190; journey to Italy, 197; at Rome, 206; at Clifton, 225; Article on *Carlyle*, 235; at Falmouth, 243; Clifton again, 247; Torquay, 251; Falmouth, 256; Naples, 275; home again, 283; a dangerous accident, 296; Mother and Wife both taken from him, 302; removes to Ventnor, 305; his last sickness and death, 314.
- Sterling's Letters to his Father, xx. 229, 237, 248, 261, 273, 283; to his Mother, 34, 94, 174, 197, 227, 232, 257, 272, 277, 285, 298, 300; to both, 206, 217, 244; to his Brother, 57; to his Son, 210, 316; to T. Carlyle, 134, 166, 179, 228, 229, 258, 279, 311, 318; to Charles Barton, 84, 183, 252, 276; to Mr. Hare, 216, 270; to Mrs. Charles Fox, 251, 252, to W. Coningham, 253, 254; to Dr. Carlyle, 253; to Dr. Symonds, 257, 272, 284, 302.
- Sterling's Classical attainments, xx. 39; unusual likeness between his speech and letters, 144, pulpit manner of reading, 178; worth as a Writer, 191, 209, 316; superior excellence in prose, 239; the *Election*, a Poem, 250; undeniable success, 266; *Cœur-de-Lion*, 305; literary remains, 326.
- Sterling's Character need not be judged in any Church-court, xx. 3, a Guy-Faux likeness, 5; lucky to have had such parents as his, 15; nomadic tendencies, 30; a headlong Boy of twelve, 33; a voracious reader and observer, 36; gifts, generousities and pieties, 38; a young ardent soul, 43; a kingly kind of man, 45; nomadic desultory ways, 47; able to argue with four or five at once, 49; a brother to all worthy souls, 55, not given to lie down and indolently

- moan, 89; rich in the power to be miserable or otherwise, 109; the talent of waiting, of all others the one he wanted most, 116; generous ardour for whatever seemed noble and true, 123; bright ingenuity and audacity, 132; candour and transparency, 145; cheery swift decision, 146; not intrinsically a devotional mind, 153; too vehement, fatally incapable of sitting still, 190; a certain grimmer shade came gradually over him, 193; beautiful and pathetic adjustment to his hard conditions, 226; a strange effulgence through the ice of earnest pain and sorrow, 298, 309; a central inflexibility and noble silent resolution, 306; perfect courage, and valiant simplicity of heart, 314; serene, victorious, divinely sad, 316; spiritual portraiture, 322.
- Sterling's personal aspect, xx. 130, 156, 320; his Life an expressive emblem of his Time, 7, 129, 326, 327.
- Sterling's Wife, her beautiful character and early troubles, xx. 90; a perilous situation, 96; her weakly constitution, 222, 247; illness, 301; sudden death, 302; an affectionate loyal-hearted Wife, 303.
- Sterling's Father, early career of, xx. 12; his restless striving, 26, connection with the *Times* Newspaper, 27, 38, a private gentleman of some figure, 126; the Magus of the *Times*, 132; abundant jolly satire, 176; his house a sunny islet and ever-open port for Sterling, 287; the *Times* Newspaper his express emblem, 290; England listened to the voice, 291; Note of thanks from Sir Robert Peel, 292; loyal admiration for Peel and Wellington, and ditto contempt for O'Connell, 294; pleasant half-banting dialect between Father and Son, 296; a fatal eclipse, 297; alone in the world, 301; closing days, 308.
- Sterling's Mother, delicate pious character of, xx. 14; affectionate care for him, 30; troubled days, 35; friendship for Madam Tormijos, 79; for Mrs. Carlyle, 132; a pleasant home, 296; fatal illness, 297; Sterling's reverent affection for her, 298, 302; news of her death, 301.
- Sternberg, Count von, his mansion of Klein-Schnellendorf, xxv. 86.
- Sternberg, Graf von, xxvii. 63.
- Sterne, vi. 21; his Father, xxii. 115, 196.
- Stettin, Duke Otto's burial in the High Church of, xxi. 219, 340, 355; Friedrich Wilhelm's possession of, 439, 457; xxii. 5; xxiii. 67.
- Steuer-Scheine, Saxon, xxvi. 177; Voltaire's attempts to traffic in, 290, 292, 313.
- Steward, Sir Thomas, Kt., death of, xiv. 94.
- Stewart of Allertoun, xvi. 149, 150.
- Stewart of Blantyre, duel with Lord Wharton, xv. 47.
- Stewart, Dugald, vi. 92; his opinion of Burns, vii. 25; of Idealism, 274.
- Stieler's Maps, xxiv. 92 n.
- Stille, Major von, xxiii. 292; xxiv. 61, 62; xxv. 128, 171; xxvi. 76, 87, 128; cited, 76 n.
- Stilling's, Jung, experience of Goethe, ix. 148.
- Stockholm *Blutbad*, xxi. 276.
- Stockings, anecdotes of, xiv. 43.
- Stockstadt, French army at, xxv. 384.
- Stoffeln, General, with Fermor at Custrin, xxviii. 58; in the Russian-Turk war, xxx. 28.
- Stofflet, of La Vendée, iv. 371.
- Stolberg, Prince von, at Torgau, cannot out-general Wolfersdorf, xxviii. 250-253; attacks Prince Henri, xxix. 317; defeated at Freyberg, 323; end of the war, 328: mentioned, 256.
- Stollhofen, Lines of, xxiii. 221.
- Stone, Mr., of the Newcastle Parliament, xxvii. 202.
- Stonyhurst, Cromwell at, xv. 20.
- Storie, Mr., notice of, xiv. 92; Cromwell's letter to, 90.
- Stormont, Lord, xxvii. 64, 74.
- Strachey, Mrs. Edward, xx. 226, 231.
- Strafford, Earl, passages in the impeachment and trial of, xi. 52; subscribes 20,000*l.* to the King, xiv. 105; in the Tower, 110; trial, execution and character, 119, 120.

- Strafford*, Sterling's tragedy of, xx. 250, 285, 306.
- Strahan*, Major, notice of, xv. 62; in Scots Army, xvi. 17, 18, 29, 88; at Glasgow, 88; Remonstrance by, 91, 92, 97; Cromwell's letter to, 92; joins Cromwell, 101; is excommunicated, 146.
- Stralsund*, xxi. 341; Friedrich Wilhelm's siege of, 435, 443.
- Strasburg*, riot at, in 1789, ii. 285; St. Just, shoes and beds, iv. 290; xxi. 347; Friedrich at, xxiv. 66.
- Strauss*, xx. 230, 258, 272.
- Straw sentry*, a Prussian, xxvi. 105.
- Strehlen*, camp of, xxv. 14.
- Strelitz*, Karl Ludwig of, xxiii. 139, 337, 340.
- Strength*. See Silence, Wisdom.
- Stricker*, the, an early German writer, viii. 228.
- Strickland*, Walter, of Council of State, xvii. 8 n., 23, 259.
- Striegau*, xxvi. 82.
- Strode*, William, imprisoned, xiv. 67.
- Struensee*, Danish Prime Minister, xxx. 109.
- Strutzki*, with Friedrich at his death, xxx. 269.
- Struve*, xxix. 331 n.
- St. Stephen's*, the new, xx. 386.
- Stuart*, Mary, ix. 48.
- Stamp-orator*, xx. 209-256; a mouth-piece of Chaos, 214, 240, 248; supreme in the lawyer department, 341.
- Stamp-oratory at zero*, xxi. 415; hideous nightmare of, xxii. 168.
- Stupidity*, blessings of, i. 157; our one enemy, xx. 119, 128, 137.
- Stusche*, Tobias, Abbot of Kamenz, xxiv. 273, 276; xxvi. 54, 72.
- Stutterheim*, left in charge of Schmöttseifen, xxviii. 280; in the Lausitz; seizing Austrian magazines, 283.
- Stuttgart*, xxii. 432.
- Style*, varieties of, i. 70; every man has his own, vi. 23; pictorial power, ix. 17; eccentricities of, 115.
- Subscription*, Irish act of, xv. 255 n.
- Suffolk*, Cromwell's letters to Deputy Lieutenants of, xiv. 135, 218.
- Suffolk*, Earl, sent to Charles I., xiv. 265:
- Suffrage*, x. 403; Universal, xx. 41, 291; recipe of popular election, 318; answer to Jefferson Brick, 323; universal-suffrage equivalent to flat despair, 331.
- Suffren*, Admiral, notice of, ii. 55.
- Sugar*, whyscarce, iii. 273; the remedy, 275.
- Suhm*, Baron von, xxii. 198, 209, 215; xxiii. 235, 332; dies on his way home, xxiv. 22.
- Suicide*, i. 161.
- Suir River*, castles on, xv. 268.
- Sulkowski*, General, prisoner at Zorn-dorf, xxviii. 81; declares war against the King of Prussia, 147; extinguished by General Wobersnow, 148; in the Polish troubles, xxix. 436.
- Sulleau*, Royalist editor, iii. 287; massacred, 361.
- Sulli*, Duc de, xxiii. 307.
- Sulzer*, M., and Friedrich, xxvi. 363, 364; in the Konig-Maupertuis controversy, 385; at Berlin on arrival of the news of Kunersdorf, xxviii. 231; xxx. 68; his death, 80.
- Summons*, Parliamentary, xvi. 228.
- Sumptuary Laws*, xiii. 269.
- Sun*, eclipse of, in 1652, xvi. 206.
- Sunset*, i. 92, 148.
- Superville*, Dr., xxvi. 355.
- Supper*, Fraternal, iv. 192.
- Supply and demand*, our grand maxim of, vii. 3; xiii. 232; brought to bear on the Black 'labour-market,' xx. 4.
- Surnames*, Hénault on, ii. 3.
- Surrey petition and riot*, xv. 10.
- Suspect*, Law of the, iv. 239; Chaudette jeered on, 311.
- Suspicion*, in France, 1788, ii. 157; in Revolution, iv. 193.
- Sutton's Hospital*. See Charter House.
- Swabian Era*, the, viii. 216; birth of German Literature, 217, 295.
- Swallows*, migrations and coöperative instincts of, i. 95.
- Swarmery*, the gathering of men into swarms, xi. 342-6.
- Swashbuckler age*, xi. 223.
- Sweden*, King of, to assist Marie Antoinette, iii. 196; shot by Ankarström, 283; Whitlocke concludes treaty with, xvii. 11; without a King,

- xxi. 448; xxiv. 264; war with Russia, 265; xxv. 65; joins the general combination against Friedrich, xxvii. 131, 250; Army put to flight by five postillions, xxviii. 9; commanded by nobody in particular, 11, 12. See Charles XII., Gustaf Adolf, Karl Gustaf.
- Swedenborgians in questionable company, ix. 336.
- Swedish Ambassador, audience of, xvii. 150, 151; takes leave, 203.
- Swieten, Van, xxx. 118, 123.
- Swift, vi. 21.
- Swindlership, xxiv. 350.
- Swineherd, the, i. 93.
- Swinton, Laird, joins Cromwell, xvi. 102; in Little Parliament, 230; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 28.
- Swiss (see Guards), at Brest, liberated, feasted, iii. 310-312; prisoners at La Force, iv. 88.
- Sword-Brothers, Livonian, xxi. 121.
- Syberg, xxiii. 171.
- Syburg, General, at Langensalza, xxix. 168; his recruiting commission, 168.
- Sydenham, Col., in Council of State, xvii. 8 n, 134.
- Sydow, Captain, at surrender of Dresden, xxviii. 265.
- Syler, Col., at Inverkeithing fight, xvi. 157.
- Symbols, i. 211; wondrous agency of, 212; extrinsic and intrinsic, 213; superannuated, 218, 225; of the God-like worn out, viii. 362.
- Symonds, Mr., engraver, xvi. 126-130.
- Synott, Col. See Sinnott.
- TAAFF, Father, killed, xv. 178.
- Taaff, Lucas, Governor of Ross, Cromwell's letters to, xv. 200, 202, 203, 204.
- Taaff, Lord, his intrigues, xvii. 228, and 228 n.
- Tabor, xxv. 410.
- Tacitus, cited, xxi. 70 n.
- Tailor-art, symbolism of the, xiii. 267.
- Tailors, symbolic significance of, i. 278.
- Tale, *The*, translated from Goethe, with elucidations, ix. 401-433.
- Talk, Coleridge's, xx. 66.
- Tallard, xxvi. 20.
- Talleyrand-Perigord, Bishop, notice of, ii. 182; at fatherland's altar, gives his blessing, iii. 79; excommunicated, 192; in London, 251, to America, iv. 141.
- Talleyrand, Marquis de, xxvi. 57.
- Tallien, notice of, iii. 25; editor of 'Ami des Citoyens,' 287, in Committee of Townhall (August 1792), iv. 12; in National Convention, 63; at Bourdeaux, 248; and Madame Cabarns, 267; recalled, suspect, 340; accuses Robespierre, 345; Thermidorian, 361.
- Talma, actor, his soirée (Marat and Dumouriez), iv. 81.
- Tamerlane, vii. 169.
- Tangermunde, xxi. 141, 177, 206; famine, 346.
- Tannenberg, battle of, xxi. 189, 215, 251, 253.
- Tannery of human skins, iv. 304.
- Tanning, improvements in, iv. 300.
- Tardivet. See Repaire.
- Target, Advocate, declines King's defence, iv. 119; his Memoir, xxx. 257.
- Tassu, M., and black cockade, ii. 310.
- Taste, true poetic, not dependent on riches, vi. 48; German authors, 56; gift of Poetry presupposes taste, viii. 167; dilettante upholstery, ix. 153.
- Tate, Zouch, M.P., introduces Self-denying Ordinance, xiv. 206.
- Tauenzein defends Neustadt, xxvi. 119; Army-Treasurer, xxviii. 140; defends Breslau against Loudon's fiery bombardment and threats, xxix. 50, 51; a brave man, true to the death, 52; at siege of Schweidnitz, 306, 314, 315; severe letter from the King on the Silesian Army, xxx. 242: mentioned also, 6.
- Tauler, Johann, viii. 253.
- Tax, ascending, iv. 178.
- Taxation, spigot of, vii. 355; ix. 45.
- Taxes, where to lay the new, xiii. 304.
- Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry, viii. 283-325.
- Tears, beautifullest kind of, xiii. 70.

Tebay, John, his account of Keith's death, xxviii. 104, 112; on sick-list, 115.

Teinitz, Elbe-, passage of, xxv. 432, 434.

Telegraph invented, iv. 300.

Tell, xxi. 149.

Teme river, near Worcester, xvi. 175.

Tempelhof's criticisms and account of the battle of Prag, xxvii. 162, 172, 173; Kolin, 229; Leuthen, 385; Zorndorf, xxviii. 72, 74; Hochkirch, 101, 111; Soubise, 124; Kunersdorf, 218, 223; Prince Henri's march of Fifty hours, 296; and manœuvring in Saxony, 302; on Friedrich's marches, xxix. 11, 47, 56, 80, 83, siege of Dresden, 16, seizure of Berlin, 101, Camp of Bunzelwitz, 190; Reichenbach, 310: cited, xxvii. 91 n.; 149 n.

Tempest, Sir Richard, Royalist, in Lancashire, xv. 11.

Templars, Knights, end of the, xxi. 116.

Temple, Pitt's brother-in-law, xxix. 244.

Temple See Prison.

Temptations in the wilderness, i. 177.

Tencin, Cardinal, xxv. 361, 382; xxvi. 415; xxvii. 299; xxix. 376 n.

Tennis-Court, National Assembly in, ii. 202; Club of, and procession to, iii. 63; master of, rewarded, 248.

Tentzel, cited, xxi. 149 n.

Termagant of Spain, xxiv. 356; xxv. 231, 233; xxvi. 229 n.

Terray, Abbé, dissolute financier, ii. 4; xxviii. 348.

Terror, consummation of, iv. 253; reign of, designated, 256; number gullotined in, 387.

Teschen, Congress of, xxx. 172, 246.

Teschen, Duke of, xxx. 6.

Tessin, Count, xxx. 79.

Tessin, Swedish Ambassador, xxv. 354.

Testimonies of Authors to *Sartor Resartus*, i. 291.

Tetschen, xxv. 401, 402.

Tetzel, xxi. 230.

Teufelsdröckh's Philosophy of Clothes, i. 7; he proposes a toast, 15; his personal aspect, and silent deep-seated Sansculottism, 16; thawed

into speech, 18; memorable watch-tower utterances, 19; alone with the Stars, 22; extremely miscellaneous environment, 22; plainness of speech, 28; universal learning, and multiplex literary style, 29; ambiguous-looking morality, 30; one instance of laughter, 31; almost total want of arrangement, 32; feeling of the ludicrous, 46; speculative Radicalism, 62; a singular Character, 72; Genesis properly an Exodus, 81; unprecedented Name, 86, infantine experience, 87; Pedagogy, 100, an almost Hindoo passivity, 100; school-boy jostling, 103; heterogeneous University-Life, 107; fever-paroxysms of Doubt, 113; first practical knowledge of the English, 115; getting under weigh, 117, ill success, 122; glimpse of high-life, 124; casts himself on the Universe, 130; reverent feeling towards women, 132; frantically in love, 133; first interview with Blumine, 136; inspired moments, 138; short of practical kitchen-stuff, 142, ideal bliss, and actual catastrophe, 143; sorrows, and peripatetic stoicism, 144; a parting glimpse of his Beloved, on her way to England, 149; how he overran the whole earth, 150; Doubt darkened into Unbelief, 156; love of Truth, 158; a feeble unit, amidst a threatening Infinitude, 160; Baphometic Fire-baptism, 164; placid indifference, 164, a Hyperborean intruder, 173; Nothingness of life, 175; Temptations in the wilderness, 177; dawning of a better day, 180; the Ideal in the Actual, 183; finds his true Calling, 191; his Biography a symbolic Adumbration, significant to those who can decipher it, 194; a wonder-lover, seeker and worker, 202; in Monmouth-Street, among the Hebrews, 233; concluding hints, 233; his public History not yet done, perhaps the better part only beginning, 287; on the Greatness of Great Men, ix. 112; on Democracy, xii. 267.

Teutsch Ritters, the, xxi. 110, origin

- of the Order, 113; removal from Palestine to Venice, 114; conversion and settlement of Prussia, 116; for more than a century a bright beacon in those Northern Countries, 121; the stuff they were made of, 122; degenerating into idleness and riches, 161; a Grand-Master assassinated, 162; pride tripped into the ditch at Tannenberg, 190; sinking steadily into final extinction, 215; new false hopes, 252; the end, 258. See Albert Hochmeister.
- Teutschland not to be cut into four, *xxix.* 339.
- Thackeray, cited, *xxvi.* 442 n.; *xxvii.* 194 n.; *xxix.* 205.
- Thadden at Colberg, *xxix.* 214, 235.
- Théatins Church granted to Dissidents, *iii.* 187.
- Theatre, German estimation of the, *v.* 56.
- Theatrical Reports, a vapid nuisance, *vii.* 120.
- Theauro John, a kind of Quaker, *xvii.* 81.
- Thémicoud. See Demikof.
- Theocracy, a, striven for by all true Reformers, *xii.* 179, 267.
- Theodore of Deux Ponts, *xxv.* 136, 140.
- Theological Metaphysics, Sterling's interest in, *xx.* 155, 160; decidedly abating, 171.
- Theory, the Man of, *xiii.* 199.
- Théot, Prophetess, on Robespierre, *iv.* 332, 339.
- Thermidor, Ninth and Tenth (July 27, 28), 1794, *iv.* 345-353.
- Théroigne, Mdle., notice of, *ii.* 169; in Insurrection of Women, 317; at Versailles (October Fifth), 329; in Austrian prison, *iii.* 230; in Jacobin tribune, 302; accounted for Insurrection (August Tenth), 356, 361; keeps her carriage, *iv.* 167; fustigated, insane, 192.
- Thersites, *xiii.* 352.
- Thiébauld, always incorrect, and the prey of stupidities, *xxv.* 264, 358; *xxvi.* 280, 356; *xxx.* 77.
- Thielicke, Mrs., killed at Frankfurt, *xxviii.* 202.
- Thierry, M., *x.* 388.
- Thinkers, how few are, *x.* 4; intellectual thrift, 321.
- Thinking Man, a, the worst enemy of the Prince of Darkness, *i.* 118, 191; true Thought can never die, 238.
- Thionville besieged, *iv.* 18; siege raised, 72.
- Thirty-nine Articles, *xiii.* 280.
- Thirty-Years War, *xxi.* 318, 327, 336; hunger the grand weapon, 345.
- Thomond, Earl. See O'Brien.
- Thomont, Milord, *xxviii.* 345.
- Thompson, Capt., Leveller, *xv.* 142; shot, 144.
- Thompson, Cornet, Leveller, *xv.* 142; shot, 143.
- Thompson, Captain, boards one of Friedrich's ships, *xxvi.* 323.
- Thomson, *xxv.* 376.
- Thor, and his adventures, *xii.* 22, 40, 41-43; his last appearance, 46.
- Thorn, town of, *xxi.* 161; hurls out the Teutsch Ratters, 216; Jesuit tragedy at, *xxii.* 208.
- Thornhaugh, Major, slain at Preston, *xv.* 26, 34.
- Thörring, Feldmarschall, *xxv.* 224; *xxvi.* 17.
- Thought, how, rules the world, *vii.* 165; *viii.* 388; *x.* 60, 76, miraculous influence of, *xii.* 25, 34, 195; musical, 98.
- Thouret, Law-reformer, *iii.* 11; dissolves Assembly, 248; guillotined, *iv.* 325.
- Thouvenot and Dumouriez, *iv.* 29.
- Thrift, value of, *x.* 336; no great empire ever founded without, *xxi.* 432; incalculable value of, *xxiii.* 284, 287. See Economics.
- Thugut at Congress of Braunau, *xxx.* 165.
- Thulmeyer, *xxiii.* 18; *xxiv.* 33, 54.
- Thunder. See Thor.
- Thüringen, *xxiii.* 136.
- Thuriot. See Rosière.
- Thurloe, Secretary to Cromwell, *xvii.* 7; Cromwell's letter to, 146; and Cromwell on Kingship, 311.
- Ticonderago attacked by Abercromby, *xxviii.* 122.
- Tieck, Ludwig, his *Volksmärchen* and

- other writings, vi. 330; his character and poetic gifts, 336.
- Tielcke, Captain, on the Schweidnitz Sieges, xxviii. 25; escapes from Prussian bondage; with Fermor at Cüstrin, 54, 58; Zorndorf, 71, 73; on the Camp of Bunzelwitz, xxix. 192: cited, xxviii. 25 n.; xxix. 192 n.
- Tillinghurst, Rev. Mr., and Cromwell, xvii. 142, 144.
- Tilson, George, xxii. 318.
- Time-Spirit, life-battle with the, i. 86, 126; Time, the universal wonder-hider, 254; and Space, quiddities not entities, vi. 194; vii. 277; the outer veil of Eternity, ix. 44, 195; the great mystery of, xii. 11.
- Times, signs of the, vii. 313-342.
- Times Newspaper, xix. 267. See Sterling's Father.
- Tindal, cited, xxiii. 142 n.; xxiv. 379 n., 394 n.
- Tinois, Voltaire's clerk, xxvi. 288 n., 315.
- Tinville, Fouquier, revolutionist, iii. 26; Jacobin, 39; Attorney-General in Tribunal Révolutionnaire, iv. 176; at trial of Queen, 242; at trial of Girondins, 246; brutal, at trial of Mme. Roland, 262; at trial of Danton, 319, 320; and Salut Public, 321; his prison-plots, 324, 336; his batches, 333; the prisons under, mock doom of, 335-338; at trial of Robespierre, 352; accused, guillotined, 378.
- Tipperary county fined, xv. 265.
- Tissot, Dr., xxx. 71, 85.
- Titchborne, Alderman, of Customs Committee, xvi. 268.
- Tithes, titles, &c., abolished, ii. 272; iii. 65.
- Titius, Professor, xxix. 432.
- Titles of Honour, i. 239.
- Titus, Capt., 50l. voted to, xiv. 288; with Charles I., 330; 'Killing no Murder,' xvii. 274 n.
- Tobacco, good and bad influences of, xxii. 166.
- Tobacco-Parliament, Friedrich Wilhelm's, xxii. 34; description of, 164; a strange Session, xxiii. 171; the last, 410.
- Tobago, Island of, xxvii. 33.
- Today, vi. 397; the conflux of two Eternities, vii. 316.
- Toland describes Sophie Charlotte, xxi. 51; his account of Prussia and Westphalia, 378: cited, 52 n.
- Tolerance, vii. 175, 244; ix. 346; true and false, xii. 163, 176.
- Toleration, xxiv. 17.
- Tollendal, Lally, pleads for his father, ii. 107; in States-General, 180; popular, crowned, 249.
- Tongue, watch well thy, ix. 50; xi. 90: miraculous gift of, ix. 218; x. 278; human talent all gone to, xix. 209, 226, 232; how to cure the evil, 220, 252. See Eloquence.
- Tongue-fence, Sterling's skill in, xx. 49, 152.
- Tonnage and Poundage disputed, xiv. 64.
- Tooke, cited, xxix. 263 n.
- Tools, influence of, i. 39; the Pen, most miraculous of tools, 191; and the Man, xiii. 308, 310.
- Toope and Sindercomb, xvii. 267.
- Torgau, beautifully defended by Wolfersdorf, xxviii. 250-253; town and its environs, xxix. 108-112; battle of, 112-133.
- Torné, Bishop, and Costumes, iii. 296.
- Tornjos, General, the main stay of his fellow Exiles, xx. 79, 80; they leave England, 88; difficulties at Gibraltar, 90; a catastrophe, 104; death, 107.
- Torrington, Lord, xxvii. 39.
- Torstenson's siege of Brieg, xxiv. 373.
- Torture, xxiv. 12.
- Toryism an overgrown Imposture, xx. 172; the Pope a respectable old Tory, 206; English Toryism not so bad as Irish, 273; goes a long way in this world, xxv. 35.
- Tottleben, at Kunersdorf, xxviii. 235; in Pommern, 384; marches, with Czernichef, on Berlin, xxix. 89; tries bombardment, 90; is reinforced by Lacy, 91; grants favourable capitulation, 92; is himself under obligations to Friedrich and Berlin, 93; will not sanction Lacy's ferocity, 93; marches off at the approach of Fried-

- rich, 98; in Eastern Pommern, 184; Colberg, 210; in the anti-Turk war, xxx. 28.
- Touche, Ritter de la, xxvi. 322.
- Toul, xxv. 285.
- Toulon, Girondin, iv. 229; occupied by English, 233; besieged, 272; surrenders, 273.
- Toulangeon, Marquis, notice of, iii. 11; on Barnave triumvirate, 233; describes Jacobins Hall, 301.
- Toulouse, Comte de, xxvi. 207.
- Tour and Taxis, Princess, xxiv. 88.
- Tournament, the, xxvi. 269.
- Tournay, Louis, at siege of Bastille, ii. 235.
- Tournay, siege of, xxvi. 57.
- Tourzel, Dame de (see Korff, Baroness de), escapes, iv. 23.
- Townshend, Lord, xxii. 279, 293, 357, 363; quarrel with Walpole, 336.
- Trade, Committee of, xvii. 176.
- Trades Union, in quest of its 'Four eights,' xi. 373.
- Tragedy, Sterling's high notions of, xx. 258.
- Trakehnen, the stud of, xxiv. 46.
- Traun, Marshal, xxv. 384, 423, 425; Friedrich's Schoolmaster in the art of War, 426, 428, 441; encamps at Marschowitz, 427, gets Beneschau, 428; follows Friedrich to Silesia, xxvi. 4, 8, 9, retires to Moravia, 10; sent to the Frankfurt countries, 50; drives Prince Conti across the Rhine, 106, 107; death, 139 n.; Friedrich acknowledges his obligations to, xxx. 18, 23.
- Trautenberg burnt down, xxvi. 126.
- Trautschke saves General Fouquet at Landshut, xxix. 14.
- Travenol Lawsuit, summary of the, xxvi. 202.
- Treasury, Commissioners of, xvii. 133; state of the, in 1656, 243.
- Treaties, Cromwell's, xvii. 11, 149, 161.
- Treaty, Ripon, xiv. 106; at Oxford, 141, 152; Uxbridge, 190; with the King, 263, 272, 286, 309; xv. 71.
- Tredah, garrison of, xv. 169; stormed, 171, 173, 180: list of officers slain at, 182.
- Trefurt, Pastor, at Petersburg, xxix. 276.
- Trenck, Baron, in Paris, iii. 28; loud-spoken braggart, xxii. 94; at Berlin Carnival, xxv. 263; arrested for breaking orders, xxvi. 105; extensively fabulous blockhead, 105; a convicted liar, 135; xxix. 35, 37: cited, xxvi. 135 n.
- Trenck, Pandour, and his Tolpatches, xxv. 242, 243, 314; in Prince Karl's Rhine Campaign, 387, 420; gets his head broken at Kolin, 431; Sohr, xxvi. 129, 133.
- Treskau, Captain, at siege of Schweidnitz, xxviii. 25.
- Treskow, General, defends Neisse against the Austrians, xxviii. 116.
- Trevor, Col., and Venables, xv. 216 x.; xvii. 174.
- Trevor, Excellency, xxv. 21.
- Tribunal Extraordinaire, iv. 176; Révolutionnaire, doings of, 240, extended, 333.
- Tricolor cockade, ii. 223.
- Trier, Kurfurst of, xxii. 453.
- Triers of preachers, xvii. 9, 136, 235.
- Triglyph, god of the Wends, xxi. 87.
- Triller, der, xi. 265, 266, 232.
- Trimberg, Hugo von, viii. 230, 244; his *Renner* a singular clear-hearted old book, 233.
- Trimmers and truckers, viii. 362; x. 107.
- Tronchet, Advocate, defends King, iv. 120, 181.
- Troopers, three, present Army-letter, xiv. 285, 286.
- Troubadour Period of Literature, viii. 216, 225.
- Truth, individual, the beginning of social good, x. 348; and Falsehood, ii. 265.
- Truthfulness, vii. 196; ix. 219; xi. 247. See Sincerity.
- Tuileries, Louis XVI. lodged at, iii. 6; a tile-field, 9; escape from Varennes, 198-202; Twentieth June at, 321; tickets of entry, 'Coblentz,' 346; Marseillaise chase Filles-Saint-Thomas to, 351; August Tenth, 355, 364; King quits forever, 366; at-

- tacked, 367; captured, 369; occupied by National Convention, iv. 189.
- Tulchan Bishops, account of, xiv. 44.
- Tunis, Dey of, brought to reason, xvii. 138.
- Turenne, his sayings full of sagacity and geniality, xii. 94; killed by a cannon-shot, xxx. 19, 23.
- Turgot, Controller of France, ii. 36; on Corn-law, 42; dismissed, 51; death of, 109.
- Turin, Lines of, xxi. 377.
- Turks, the, xxii. 448 n.; attacked by Russia and Austria, xxiii. 348, 370; ruin put off till a better time, 401; they begin to take interest in the Polish-Russian quarrel, xxix. 433-441; declare war against Russia, 443; the Blind against the Purbblind, 443-445; getting scattered in panic rout, xxx. 10; darkening the fairest part of God's creation, 11; some glances into the extremely brutish phenomenon, 27-32; they solicit Friedrich to mediate a peace for them, 34.
- Turner, Rev. Mr., Cromwell's opinion of, xvii. 19.
- Turner, Sir James, narrative by, xv. 18; wounded by his own men, 27, 29; prisoner, 42.
- Turpin, Hussar, xxvii. 280, 292.
- Tweedale, Earl of, on Committee of Kingship, xvii. 288.
- Tweeddale, Marquis of, Letter to, on Fontenoy, xxvi. 64 n.: cited, xxvii. 204 n.
- Twistleton, Col., at Dunbar, xvi. 50.
- Two Hundred and Fifty Years ago, a Fragment about Duels, xi. 213-227; Holles of Houghton, 214; Croydon Races, 218; Sir Thomas Dutton and Sir Hatton Cheek, 222.
- Tyll Eulenspiegel*, adventures of, viii. 249.
- Tyrants, French People risen against, iv. 237, 292; so-called, xxi. 423.
- Tyrawley, Lord, at Portugal, xxix. 245.
- Tyreconnell, Excellency, xxvi. 278; at Potsdam, 343-345, 348, 355, 365.
- UCKERMUNDE, xxi. 221.
- Ulm, xxiii. 136.
- Ulrich von Hutten, cited, xxi. 228 n.
- Ulrique Eleonora, Queen of Sweden, xxi. 458.
- Ulrique, Princess Louisa, xxi. 458; xxii. 96; xxiv. 267; Letter to Friedrich, xxv. 262; Marriage, 353, 357; becomes Queen of Sweden, xxvi. 317; chagrins and contumacities; Senators demand sight and count of the Crown Jewels, xxx. 38, she visits Berlin, 76; Büsching's account of her, 78-80; her death, 83, 84.
- Ulster pikes, xv. 228.
- Umminger, J. J., of Landshut, xxv. 99, 103.
- Unanimity in folly, xiii. 179.
- Unbelief, era of, i. 112, 158; Doubt darkening into, 156; escape from, 178.
- Unconscious, the, the alone complete, xiii. 145.
- Unconsciousness, the first condition of health, viii. 329, 346; the fathomless domain of, ix. 293.
- Underwood, Captain, Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 204.
- Unertl, Baron von, passionately warns Karl Albert against the French alliance, xxiv. 374; xxv. 267.
- Unhappy sugary brethren, xix. 79; happiness not come, 402.
- Uniformity in religion, xiv. 108, 275.
- Union of Frankfurt, xxv. 391.
- United States assert liberty, ii. 8; embassy to Louis XVI., 54; aided by France, 54; of Congress in, 275.
- Universe, general high court of the, xiii. 13, 31, 225; a great unintelligible Perhaps, 171; *become* the humbug it was thought to be, 190; a beggarly Universe, 234; is made by Law, 284; a monarchy and hierarchy, xix. 27; the vesture of an invisible Infinite, 333, 357; M'Croudy's notion of, 339; all things to all men, 399; 'open secret' of, 400. See Laws.
- Universities, i. 109; value of, xi. 301-303; endowments, 317-19; of Prague and Vienna, viii. 261; disputed seniority of Oxford and Cambridge, xi. 164; necessity for, in earlier days, xii. 191; the English, xx. 40.

- Unruh, Herr von, killed by the Poles, xxx. 56.
- Unruh, Major, at Glatz, xxix. 36.
- Unseen, the, xiii. 255.
- Untamability, x. 37, 78.
- Unveracity, xi. 238, 247. See Sincerity.
- Unwisdom, infallible fruits of, xiii. 39.
- Urrey, Col. See Hurry.
- Ursula, St., xxii. 456.
- Ushant, sea-fight, ii. 55.
- Utilitarianism, i. 156, 226; vi. 66, 95, 252; vii. 238, 332; viii. 118, 315, 374; Bentham's utilitarian funeral, ix. 128.
- Utrecht, Treaty of, xxi. 380, 438; xxii. 101, xxvi. 431.
- Uttoxeter, capture of Scots at, xv. 29.
- VACH, affair at, xxvii. 189.
- Vacuum, and the serene blue, xiii. 234.
- Valadi, Marquis, notice of, ii. 169; Gardes Françaises and, 213; guillotined, iv. 249.
- Valazé, Girondin, iii. 256; on trial of Louis, iv. 107; plots at his house, 195; trial of, 246; stabs himself, 247.
- Valenciennes besieged, iv. 207; surrendered, 224.
- Valet-, the, theory of heroes, viii. 90.
- Valets and heroes, xiii. 32, 103, 185, 273, 360; London valets dismissed annually to the streets, 342. See Flunkies.
- Valfons, Marquis de, cited, xxvi. 63 n.; xxvii. 284 n.
- Valmy, action at, iv. 71.
- Valori drops a diplomatic note, xxv. 28; at Gross Neundorf, 61, 87, 90; at siege of Neisse, 92; goes to Belleisle, 111; at Dresden, 124; with the French Army at Trebitsch, 151; nettled with Comte Maurice, 152; with Friedrich in his Saxon troubles, 158; with Belleisle at Prag, 229; suspicions of Voltaire, 323; informs Friedrich of Belleisle's capture, xxvi. 20; his mission to Dresden, 35-37; with Friedrich in Silesia, 72; at Hohenfriedberg battle, 85, 88, 92, 94, 98; falls into disgrace with Friedrich, 109; saved from Pandours by D'Arget, 120, quits the army for Breslau, 126; tries to prevent the Peace of Dresden, 171; blames Friedrich in regard to Pompadour, xxvii. 19; conversation with the Prince of Prussia, 44, 45; quits Berlin, 76; letter from Prince of Prussia, 95; mentioned also, xxiv. 33, 97, 268, 369; xxv. 24, 149, 195, 418; xxvi. 15, 17, 30, 39: cited, 15 n.
- Valour, the basis of all virtue, xii. 38, 41; Norse consecration of, 47; Christian valour, 142.
- Vampire-bats, ecclesiastic, xi. 79.
- Vandals. See Wends.
- Van Druske, Gen., taken, xv. 34.
- Vane, Sir Henry, sen., in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23.
- Vane, Sir Henry, jun., of Committee of Both Kingdoms, xiv. 211; of Council of State, xv. 111; character of, xvi. 194; a juggler, 225; a rejected M.P. candidate, xvii. 198.
- Varenne, Maton de la, Advocate, his experiences in September, iv. 22.
- Varennés described, Louis near, iii. 219-224 (see Sausse); Prussians occupy, iv. 27.
- Varigny, Bodyguard, massacred (October Fifth), ii. 346.
- Varlet, 'Apostle of Liberty,' iv. 124, 149, 170; arrested, 194.
- Varney, Sir Edmund, in Tredah, xv. 172, 173.
- Varney, Sir Ralph, his Notes, xiv. 109.
- Varnhagen's account of Voltaire's arrest, xxvi. 405: cited, xxi. 31 n.; xxvi. 242 n.; xxviii. 46 n.; xxix. 246 n. See Ense.
- Varnish, conservative, xi. 360.
- Vates and Seer, the true Poet a, viii. 388; x. 248; xi. 232.
- Vaticination, vii. 313.
- Vattel, of *Droit des Gens*, at Berlin, xxv. 156.
- Vaudrenil, M. de, loses Montreal, xxviii. 312.
- Vangrenand, M. de, xxvi. 171, 172.
- Vehse, cited, xxx. 86 n.
- Vellinghausen, battle of, xxix. 200-5.
- Venables, Col., at Derry, xv. 181, 214, 217; made General, sails with the fleet, xvii. 84; sent to the Tower, 152, 158-161.

- Vendée*, La, Commissioners to, iii. 272; state of, in 1792, 291; insurrection in, iv. 16; war, after King's death, 168, 283; on fire, 267; pacificated, 370.
- Vendémiaire*, Thirteenth (Oct. 4), 1795, iv. 394-397.
- Vengeur*, sinking of the, iv. 298; xi. 3-24.
- Venner*, Cooper, rising by, xvii. 297, 298.
- Veracity*, the one sanctity of life, xx. 130; small still voices, 171; clear and perfect fidelity to truth, 322. See *Unveracity*.
- Verbs*, Irregular, National Assembly at, ii. 267.
- Verdun* to be besieged, iv. 18, 26; surrendered, 27; xxv. 285.
- Vere* family, Fairfax's wife of the, xvi. 6.
- Vere*, Sir Horace, xxi. 336.
- Vergennes*, M. de, Prime Minister, ii. 79; in Turkey, trying to kindle war with Russia, xxix. 441; xxx. 61; death of, ii. 91.
- Vergniaud*, notice of, iii. 255; too languid, 298; during August Tenth, 323; orations of, iv. 8; President at King's condemnation, 130; in fall of Girondins, 197; trial of, 246; at last supper of Girondins, 247.
- Vermond*, Abbé de, Queen's reader, ii. 92.
- Vermuyden*, Col., notice of, xiv. 217.
- Vernon*, Admiral, xxiv. 120, 144; attacks *Porto-Bello*, 391; *Carthagena*, 392, 394; quarrel with *Wentworth*, 397; miserable consequences, 399.
- Versailles*, death of Louis XV. at, ii. 2, 28; Tennis-Court, 203; in Bastille time, National Assembly at, 228, 248; troops to, 303; march of women on, 317; of French Guards on, 323; halt of women near, 324; insurrection scene at, 327; the Chateau forced, 345; Orléans prisoners massacred at, iv. 58.
- Vesuvius*, eruptions of, xxix. 351.
- Veto*, question of the, ii. 299; iii. 292, 319; eluded, 332.
- Vetus*, *Letters* of, xx. 27.
- Viard*, Spy, Mme. Roland and, iv. 125.
- Vicars's* relation of *Winceby* fight, xiv. 180.
- Victor Amadeus* King of *Sardinia*, xxiii. 64.
- Victor Leopold* of *Anhalt-Bernburg*, xxvi. 45.
- Vienna*, Congress of, xxi. 332; Karl VI.'s Treaty of, xxii. 121; xxiii. 168; what Friedrich thought of the Vienna Court, 163.
- View-hunting* and diseased self-consciousness, i. 149; viii. 354.
- Vigo*, descent on, xxii. 115.
- Vilate*, juryman, guillotined, iv. 378; book by, 379.
- Villa*, Dr., xxii. 329, 335.
- Villaret-Joyeuse*, Admiral, beaten by Howe, iv. 298.
- Villars*, Marshal, xxiii. 209.
- Villars*, Duchess de (Daughter-in-law of the above), immortalises *Voltaire* with a kiss, xxv. 266.
- Villaumes*, milliners, their patriotic gift, iv. 16.
- Villebois*, General, xxix. 283.
- Villemain*, M., criticised, xiv. 227.
- Villequier*, Duke de, emigrates, iii. 164.
- Villiers*, Mr., xxv. 97; Sir Thomas, xxvi. 156, 170, 177, 246.
- Vilshofen*, xxvi. 40.
- Vincennes* Castle to be repaired, iii. 158; riot at, 159; saved by *Lafayette*, 162.
- Vincent*, of War-Office, iv. 284; arrested, 310; guillotined, 314.
- Vincent*, St., Island of, Sterling's residence in, xx. 93.
- Viner's*, Mr., Speech in Parliament, xxiv. 378.
- Vioménil* makes bad worse in Poland, xxix. 441.
- Virgil's* *Æneid*, ix. 11.
- Virginia* and *Maryland*, differences between, xvii. 85.
- Virnsperg*, xxi. 111.
- Virtue*, healthy and unhealthy, viii. 336; synonym of *Pleasure*, ix. 297; raw materials of, xix. 78.
- Vitus*, St., prayers to, xxv. 401; xxvi. 30.
- Vladislaus* King of *Hungary* and *Bohemia*, xxi. 238, 241, 290.
- Voghera*, Marquis de, xxx. 222.

Vohburg Family, the, **xxi.** 105.

Voigt, cited, **xxi.** 83 n., 126 n.

Voigtland, Duke of, **xxi.** 128, 160.

Volney, Jean Jacques and Company, **xi.** 96.

Voltaire, **i.** 186; the Parisian divinity, 243; at Paris, **ii.** 51; last dictator among the French, **vi.** 236, 252; **vii.** 165-246; contrasted with Goethe, **vi.** 290-2; the man of his century, **vii.** 171; adroitness and multifarious success, 177; rectitude, 180; essentially a mocker, 182; petty explosiveness, 186; vanity his ruling passion, 190; visit to the Café de Procope, 191; lax morality, 195; greatest of *persifleurs*, 198; visit to Frederick the Great, 200; his trouble with his women, 201; last triumphal visit to Paris, 210; **ix.** 116; his death, **vii.** 217; his intellectual gifts, 219; criticisms of Shakspeare, 227; opposition to Christianity, 231; of all Frenchmen the most French, **ix.** 261; burial-place of, **iii.** 177.

Voltaire, and his scandalous Life of Friedrich, **xxi.** 17; **xxii.** 469, 476; his Life of Charles XII., **xxi.** 448; **xxii.** 206; **xxiii.** 313; his first renown, **xxii.** 55; sees the Congress of Cambrai, 117; his *Henriade*, 199; **xxiii.** 313; his Name, **xxii.** 206; **xxiii.** 309; Friedrich's admiration of, 146, 321, 322; their correspondence, 301, 321, 360; Sauerteig's estimate of, 302; no proper History of Voltaire, 303. His parentage and youth, 304; insulted by the Duc de Rohan, 308; challenges him, and flies to England, 309; English influences and associates, 310; his stereotype Englishman, 312; a shrewd financier, 313; returns triumphant to France, 314; lions and dogs in his path, 315; Madame du Châtelet, 317; life at Cirey, 319; his first letter to Friedrich, 326; his account of Luiseius; difference between a witty satire and a prose fact, 355; edits Friedrich's *Anti-Macchavel*, 381; receives a keg of wine from Friedrich, **xxiv.** 8; printing the *Anti-Macchiavel*, 56; Friedrich's pressing invitations, 57; ac-

count of the Strasburg adventure, 65, 77; Voltaire and Maupertuis, 78; first interview with Friedrich, 87; what he thought of the Herstal affair, 113; first visit to Berlin, 152; at Lille, 327; quizzes Maupertuis, 333; "Frédéric le Grand," **xxv.** 203; visits Friedrich at Aachen, 216, 250; getting *Mahomet* on the boards, 248; home to Cirey again, 264; vacancy in the Academy, 265; made immortal by a kiss, 266; fourth visit to Friedrich, 218; differences with Madame du Châtelet, 319, 335; his secret Diplomatic Commission, 320; on slippery ground, 323; hands-in a "Memorial" to Friedrich, 323, 326; end of his diplomacy, 332; Three Madrigals, 333. Letters: to Maupertuis, **xxiv.** 82, 96; **xxv.** 334; to Cideville, **xxiv.** 98; **xxv.** 250; to D'Argenson, 250; Fleury, 251; Amelot, 330. First seen by Louis XV. at Freyburg, 416; celebrates the victory of Fontenoy, **xxvi.** 69; a gleam in him from the Eternities, 197; makes way at Court, 200; no favourite with Louis XV., 201, 205; gets into the Academy, 202; Travenol lawsuit, 202, 204; on a visit at Sceaux, 206-213; tremulous anxiety about his manuscripts, 213; his account of Madame du Châtelet's lying-in, 235; singular emotion at her death, 236; grand reception at Berlin, 264; seen by Collini at the Carrousel, 272; not yet sunset with him, 276; coolness towards him at the French Court, 276; every precaution that his Berlin visit should be no loss, 277; his own account of his Berlin festivities, 278; Friedrich's Supreme of Literature, 279; spiteful rumours, 280; really attached to Friedrich, 282; visited by König, 286; gets D'Arnaud dismissed, 289; shameful Jew-lawsuit, 289-311; illegal stockjobbing, 291; clutches Jew Hirsch by the windpipe, 303; calls on Formey, 304; a fraudulent document, 307-309; left languishing in Berlin, 312, 314; cosy little dinners, 314; tries to keep up appearances, 315, 333; strives to

forget there ever was a Hirsch, 329; sure enough a strange Trismegistus, 330; occasional flights to Paris, 331; ill-health, discontent, misery driven into meanness, 333; his *Louis Quatorze* goes steadily on, 334; honest literary help to Friedrich, 335; little bits of flatteries, 336, 337; can keep patience with Maupertuis no longer, 338, 353, 354; a certain jealous respect for Rothenburg, 344; fractions of letters to Friedrich, 346; *Louis Quatorze* published, and pirated; 'all Prussia to the rescue,' 351; the 'orange-skin' and 'dirty-linen' rumours, 352, 353; La Mettrie's death, 355; enmity of La Beaumelle, 357; testifies to Friedrich's conversational powers, 364; obscene scandals about Friedrich, 371; takes part in the König-Maupertuis quarrel, 387; letter on the subject, quizzing Maupertuis, 387; Friedrich indignantly replies, 389; *Doctor Akakia*, 390, 392; published in spite of his promise to the King, 393; sick, and in disgrace, 393, 396; outward reconciliation, 395-399; last interview with Friedrich, 399; goes to Dresden, 400; receives a threatening letter from Maupertuis, and replies to it, 400; at the Court of Sachsen-Gotha, 401; is arrested at Frankfurt, 403-414; strikes Van Duren, 408; wanders about for several years, 414; Wilhelmina very kind to him, 415, 416; writes to Friedrich, 448; at Colmar, visit from "the Angels," 415; his successive lodging-places, 415 n.; in different Epigram on Kings Friedrich and George, xxvii. 114; Wilhelmina urges him to help in her peace-project, &c., 299, 304-307; renewed correspondence with Friedrich, 300, 305, 311; xxviii. 288, 326; a good word for Soubise, 124; verses on Wilhelmina, 135 n.; peace-expectations, 287, 288, 355; last touch to Maupertuis's life-drama, 340, 362, 368, 370; was not the publisher of *Œuvres du Philosophe de Sans-Souci*, 350; characteristic correspondence with and about Friedrich, 359-375;

'Lion and Mouse,' 362, 364; 'Luc' his nickname for Friedrich, 364; case of Widow Calas, 371; hatred of a fanatic Popedom, xxix. 350; has no anticipation of the coming French Revolution, 350, 351; his interest in the expected liberation of Greece, xxx. 29; writes to Friedrich of the visit of Wilhelmina's Daughter, 35-38; longs to do battle on L'Infâme, 39; Dr. Burney's account of him at Ferney, 96-99; Mr. Sherlock's, 99-105; his gay costume, 100; his high opinion of Newton, 105; apotheosis at Paris, and death, 152, 153; Smellungus on, 169, 170: mentioned also, xxiv. 5, 15, 21, 38, 134, 208, 281; xxvi. 177, 183, 374; xxix. 421; xxx. 29, 133, 140, 154 n.: cited, xxi. 17 n.; xxii. 207 n.; xxiv. 60 n., 66 n.; xxvi. 61 n.; xxvii. 307 n.; xxix. 76 n.

Voltaire-worship, xii. 17.

Volto Santo, chief of relics, xx. 204.

Voluntary principle, xiv. 275.

Von Loen, cited, xxii. 56 n.; xxiv. * 42 n.

Vota, the famous Jesuit, xxi. 49.

Votes did not carry Columbus to America, xxiv. 5.

Voting, foolish unanimity of, xix. 20; large liberty of 'voting' in God's Universe, but under conditions inextinguishable, 27, 245, 282, 286, 330; what to do with the 'fool's vote,' 286, 292, 379; the 'votes' of all men worth knowing, 289; the horse's 'vote,' 294; the slave's, 300; the man worth taking the vote of, 302.

Vowle's plot, xvii. 17, 20; xviii. 267 (*App.*).

Vyner, Sir Thomas, Lord Mayor of London, Cromwell's letter to, xvii. 18.

WACKERBART, Fieldmarshal, xxii. 215, 381.

Wade, General, xxv. 297, 361, 364, 382, 388, 390; his helplessness, 393; xxvi. 56.

Wages, fair day's for fair day's work, xiii. 24, 253; no index of well-being, x. 353.

Waghäusel, xxiii. 224.

- Wagram, Napoleon at, x. 300; not such a beating as Rossbach, xxi. 10, 137.
- Wagstaff, Sir Joseph, in arms, xvii. 129, 220. See Penruddock.
- Wahlstadt, xxix. 62.
- Wakefield, Lord Fairfax at, xiv. 153.
- Wakenitz, Gen., at Zorndorf, xxviii. 76.
- Walch, xxvi. 259.
- Waldau, Colonel, xxii. 409; xxiii. 150.
- Waldburg, Colonel Truchsess von, xxii. 296; xxiv. 7; xxv. 163 n.; and the Pandours, 436; his death, xxvi. 91.
- Waldeck, at Fontenoy, xxvi. 59, 66.
- Waldenses, notice of the, xvii. 134.
- Wales, tumults in, xv. 3.
- Wales, Prince of, Fleet revolts to, xv. 17; at Yarmouth, 17; ostrich-plume, xxi. 173; ancestors, xxii. 415.
- Walker, Clement, M.P., described, xiv. 321; purged by Pride, xv. 103.
- Wallace, Scotland's debt to, xiii. 16.
- Wallenstein, xxi. 334, 341, 344, 444; xxiii. 161.
- Wallenstein, Schiller's, brief sketch of, v. 152; scene of Max Piccolomini and his Father, 161; of Max and the Princess Thekla, 167; of Thekla's last resolve, 169.
- Waller, Poet, his plot, xiv. 161; Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 276 (*App.*).
- Waller, Sir Hardress, at Bristol siege, xiv. 236; wounded at Basing, 245.
- Waller, Sir William, in high repute, xiv. 152; beaten at Lansdown heath, 167; his army deserts, 201; is Presbyterian, 284; deputed to Army, 285; purged by Pride, xv. 103.
- Wallis, xxiv. 143, 183; at Breslau, 184; strengthens Glogau, 186; will resist to the utmost, 198, 287; surrenders, 292; at Habelschwert, xxvi. 11.
- Wallis, Colonel, conspires with traitor Warkotsch for the betrayal of Friedrich, xxix. 229-233.
- Wallop, Robert, M.P., notice of, xv. 185 n.; in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23.
- Walpole, Horace, Memoirs of, x. 381; is a collector of letters, xv. 112; describes a royal mistress, xxii. 85, 251; xxvi. 246; on the fight of Kloster Kampen, xxix. 140; on Dissenter Mauduit, and the German War, 144-146; 'Letter to Jean Jacques,' xxx. 16; friendship for Conway, 106; his 'George the Second,' xxvii. 195, 197: cited, xxii. 83 n., 205 n.; xxvi. 277 n.; xxvii. 195 n.; xxix. 140 n.
- Walpole, Robert, xxii. 83, 197; xxiii. 347, 374, 404; xxiv. 281; the phenomenon of, in England, 382, 386, 393, 400; xxvi. 246; his talking apparatus, xxvii. 194: cited, xxvi. 277 n.
- Walpole, Home Secretary, bursts into tears, xi. 351.
- Walpot von Bassenheim, xxi. 113.
- Walrave, Engineer, xxiv. 295, 371; xxv. 94, 167; sulky at the Old Dessauer's bantering, 169; is a brutish polygamist, 170; prisoner for life, xxvii. 43.
- Walter the penniless, xi. 352.
- Walton, Col., Cromwell's letters to, xiv. 193, 199; account of, 195; at trial of King, xv. 105.
- Walton, Dr., Cromwell's letter to, xviii. 261.
- Walwyn, William, Leveller, xv. 181.
- Wangenheim, Major von, and her Polish Majesty, xxvii. 62, 63.
- Wangenheim, General, in battle of Minden, xxviii. 191, 195.
- War, i. 167; civil, manual and lingual, iii. 20; French, becomes general, 119; the Thirty-Years, xiv. 72; with Scots, 104; the Bishops', 105; Civil, commenced, 114; exciting cause of, 118; in 1643, 141; Second Civil, xv. 3; art of, xxi. 10; xxiv. 126; Wars not memorable, 342; needless ditto, xxv. 11, not a school of pity, 427; omnipotence of luck in matters of, xxvi. 173, 193; not an over-fond Mother to her sons, xxix. 21. See Army, Battle, Dutch, Girondins, Spain, Welsh.
- Warkotsch, Baron von, entertaining Friedrich at Schonbrunn, xxix. 225; traitorously betrays him to the Austrians, but his plot discovered, 227-231; arrested and escapes, 232-234.
- Warnery, xxvii. 170.

- Warrington, Scots surrender at, xv. 28, 35.
- Warriston. See Johnston, Archibald.
- Warsaw, battle of, xxi. 357; Kalkstein kidnapped at, 369; Election at, xxii. 200; 'Union' and 'Treaty' of, xxvi. 32, 34; xxvii. 5, 10, 11.
- Wartburg and its immortal remembrances and monitions, xi. 270; romantic old hill-castle, xxi. 122.
- Wartensleben, Captain, xxiii. 365, 367; Adjutant-General, xxiv. 177, 305.
- Warwick, Earl, notice of, xvii. 192; at Installation, xviii. 85; one of Cromwell's Lords, 101; letter to Cromwell, 160.
- Warwick, Sir Philip, his opinion of Cromwell, xiv. 99, 111.
- Washing, symbolic influences of, xiii. 289.
- Washington, George, key of Bastille sent to, ii. 258; formula for Lafayette, 180; is Colonel of a regiment in Ohio, xxvi. 433; early war-passages with the French, 437, 438: mentioned also, xxviii. 122.
- Wasner, Austrian Minister at Paris, xxv. 97.
- Watch and Canary Bird*, Mrs. Carlyle's, xx. 182.
- Waterford besieged, xv. 221; Cromwell's correspondence at, *App.* xviii. 228-231.
- Waterhouse, John, recommended by Cromwell, xvi. 134.
- Watigny, battle of, iv. 295.
- Watt, James, x. 399; xx. 241.
- Watt, Mosstrooper, xvi. 95.
- Waugh, Rev. John, at Dunbar battle, xvi. 44; description of, 123, 124.
- Wealth, true, xiii. 345, 362.
- Weber, Queen's foster-brother, in Insurrection of Women, ii. 342, 358; in National Guard, iii. 315; Queen leaving Vienna, iv. 244.
- Weber, cited, xxi. 257 n.; xxiv. 267 n.
- Wedell, General, at Lenthén, xxvii. 391; Saxony, xxviii. 118; is sent against Soltikof, 171; foiled in the battle of Züllichau, 174-8; marches towards Frankfurt, 187; at siege of Dresden, xxix. 32; becomes War-Minister, 373.
- Wedell, Leonidas, at Elbe-Teinitz, xxv. 433, 434; xxviii. 174.
- Wegführer, cited, xxi. 56 n.
- Wehla, General, enters Saxony, xxviii. 256; at siege of Dresden, 260; captured by Prince Henri at Hoyerswerda, 294.
- Wehlau, xxiii. 28.
- Weibertreue*, xxii. 443.
- Weimar, Bernhard of, in Thirty-Years War, xi. 288; xiv. 72.
- Weimar, Duke of, assists Schiller, v. 178; beneficent to men of letters, xi. 287, what he did for the culture of his nation, xiii. 350.
- Weimar and its intellectual wealth, ix. 157.
- Weingarten, senior and junior, xxvii. 8.
- Weinheim, xxiii. 244.
- Weinsberg, siege of, xxi. 354 n.; xxii. 443.
- Weissembourg, lines of, iv. 296.
- Weissenberg, battle of, xxi. 336, 349; xxiii. 161.
- Weissenborn, xxvi. 259.
- Weissenburg, lines of, xxv. 387.
- Weissenfels, xxvii. 328.
- Weissenfels, Johann Adolf, Duke of, xxii. 234, 243, 312, 323, 381; xxiii. 136, 137, 204; xxv. 395; interview with Friedrich, 401; marches to join the Austrians, 422, 426; sends Saxe to waylay Einsiedel, 438; help to Prince Karl in invasion of Silesia, xxvi. 50, 72; in junction with the Austrians, 77, 80, 81; Hohenfriedberg, 83, 87, 91, 96.
- Weiss, Theresa. See Heyne.
- Welden, Col., at Bristol siege, xiv. 234.
- Welf Sovereigns, the, xxv. 290.
- Welfs, the, xxiii. 94.
- Wells, Rev. Mr., notice of, xiv. 93.
- Welmina, near Lobositz, xxvii. 84.
- Welser, Philippine, viii. 260.
- Welsh war, xv. 3; ended, 17; disturbances, xviii. 214; villages, xx. 20.
- Wenck, cited, xxix. 338 n.
- Wends, settling in Europe, xxi. 70, 80; converted to Christianity and civilisation, 86, 88, 97.
- Wentworth, Sir John, fined 1000*l.*, xiv. 140.

- Wentworth, Sir Peter, in the Rump, xvi. 223.
- Wentworth, General, at Carthage, xxiv. 395, 397, 400.
- Wentzel (or Wenzel), the young Bohemian King, xxi. 149, 166; killed in Olmütz, xxviii. 27.
- Wenzel, Kaiser, xxi. 177, 181, 187, 190-97.
- Werben, xxiii. 138.
- Werner, Life and Writings of, vi. 103-168; drama of the *Söhne des Thals*, 111; glimpses of hidden meaning, 132; prophetic aspirations, 135; his mother's death, 139; intercourse with Hoffmann, 141; *Kreuz an der Ostsee*, 142; *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft*, 145; his repeated divorces, 150; his dislike for modern Protestantism, 152; becomes a Catholic, 155; death, 157; questionable character, 158; melancholy posthumous fragment, 162.
- Werner, General, xxvii. 190; at Lands-hut, xxviii. 280, 301; rescues Colberg, xxix. 87; defends Belgard, 185; again at Colberg, 210; taken prisoner and carried to Petersburg, 213; liberated, returns home, 281.
- Werthern, Herr Graf von, xxvi. 253.
- West, Col., at Inverkeithing fight, xvi. 157.
- West, Gilbert, xxv. 376.
- West-Indian Colonies sinking into ruin, xi. 173; whose the 'proprietaryship' of them, 199, 203; Tornado, xx. 94.
- Westermann in August Tenth, iii. 864; purged out of the Jacobins, iv. 312; tried, guillotined, 319.
- Westminster Hall, riots in, xiv. 122; xv. 10.
- Weston, Henry, Cromwell's Letter to, xvi. 270.
- Westphalen's, Herr, Leitmeritz Journal, xxvii. 237, 238: cited, 236 n.
- Westphalia, Treaty of, xxi. 354; xxiii. 127; savage condition of, xxi. 378; hams, 379.
- Westrow, Tom, notice of, xvi. 171, 172.
- Wettin line of Saxon Princes, xi. 256.
- Wexford besieged, xv. 186; propositions for surrender of, 192; stormed, 196.
- Whalley, Capt., at Cambridge, xiv. 134; Major, commended, 158, 159; meets the King, 288; guards him, 309; at his trial, xv. 105; Commissary-General in Scots War, xvi. 11; skirmishes with the Scots, 15, 17; wounded at Dunbar, 52; his letter to Governor Dundas, 66; in Fife, 165; at Conference at Speaker's, 200-203; removes the Mace, xvii. 50; Major-General, 155 n.; on Committee of Kingship, 288; in favour of Kingship, xviii. 79; one of Cromwell's Lords, 101.
- Wharton, Duke, character of, xv. 50.
- Wharton, Lord, a Puritan, xiv. 211, 315; his character, xv. 47, 231; Cromwell's letters to, 48, 231; xvi. 63, 172; xviii. 259.
- Wharton manor-house, xv. 47.
- Whelocke, Abraham, the Orientalist, xviii. 182 (*App.*).
- Whiggamore raid, xv. 43, 53.
- Whitaker, Historian, mistake by, xiv. 38 n.
- White, Major, at Dunbar, xvi. 51.
- White of Selborne, ix. 20.
- Whitehall, Cromwell removes to, xvii. 11.
- Whitfield, Rev. Mr., xxviii. 16.
- Whitlocke, Bulstrode, of Council of State, xv. 111; Cromwell's present to, xvi. 182; at Conference at Speaker's, 200-203; Cromwell consults with, 215; goes to Sweden, xvii. 11 (and *App.* xviii. 264); in Cromwell's First Parliament, 23; his quarrel with Cromwell, 133; in Cromwell's Second Parliament, 253; on Committee of Kingship, 288, 297; and Cromwell on Kingship, 311; at Installation, xviii. 85; one of Cromwell's Lords, 101; Cromwell's letter to, 264.
- Whole, only in the, can the parts be truly seen, vii. 353.
- Wholeness and healthy unconsciousness, viii. 330, 345, 396; ix. 298, 313.
- Widdrington, Sir Thomas, at Conference at Speaker's, xvi. 201-203; Keeper of Great Seal, xvii. 133; elected Speaker, 268; at Installation, xviii. 85.
- Wied, General, with Friedrich at Bur-

keradorf, xxix. 293-303; sent with reinforcements into Saxony, 317, 325.
 Wieland, vi. 56.
 Wiesenthal, xxiii. 224.
 Wieskau, Camp of, xxvi. 51.
 Wigan Moor, Scots Army at, xv. 26.
 Wight, Charles I., at Isle of, xiv. 312, 315.
 Wigs, Friedrich Wilhelm's taxes on, xxi. 430.
 Wilde, Chief Baron, notice of, xviii. 271; Cromwell's letter to, 272.
 Wilderspin, xi. 384.
 Wildman, Mr., in Cromwell's First Parliament, xvii. 23; opposed to Cromwell, 80; seized plotting, is put in Chepstow Castle, 128.
 Wilhelm Bishop of Riga, xxi. 248.
 Wilhelm of Hessen, xxi. 335, 344.
 Wilhelm of Meissen, xi. 257.
Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels, vi. 262-282, 303-310; Travels, extract from, xi. 324.
Wilhelm Tell, Schiller's, truthfulness of, v. 203; scene of Gessler's death, 208.
 Wilhelm, Viceregent of Hessen, xxv. 138, 273, 276, 302, 343; and his Hessians, 418; xxvi. 40; xxvii. 37; entertains Belleisle at Cassel, xxvi. 18; consents to be neutral, 38; in Pymont, 189; death of his Brother, 317; lodges Voltaire, 406.
 Wilhelm the Rich, Markgraf of Meissen, xxi. 187.
 Wilhelm, Prince Margraf, death of, xxv. 405.
 Wilhelmmina, Frederika Sophie, xxi. 26, 39, 110, 234, 382; xxii. 95; her Book, with its shrill exaggerations, yet earnest veracity, xxi. 392, 413; xxii. 162; xxiii. 255; her Portrait as a child, xxi. 454; her account of Czar Peter's visit, xxii. 6, 10; recollections of Wusterhausen, 32; love for her Brother, 37; proposed marriage with the Prince of Wales, 81, 130, 227, 342; interview with George I., 89; her notion of Grumkow and the Old Dessauer, 146; account of Franke the Pietist, 210; her Brother's visit to King August, 218; August's visit to Berlin, 227; Wilhelmmina's several ineffectual Suitors,

232, 285, 312; illness, 247, 265, 302; her sister Louisa's marriage, 262; her Father's violent ill-usage, 265, 281, 308; anxiety about her Brother, 310; is to be married out of hand, 312; worn down by agitations, 323; Friedrich of Baireuth, 324; xxiii. 16; troubles with her Mother, xxii. 327; xxiii. 182; Dr. Villa, xxii. 329; her Brother talks of flight, 334; prematurely saluted as Princess of Wales, 341; Katte's unwise worship, 404; no marriage with England, 404; her Brother's attempted flight, and arrest, 459; his letters burnt, and fictitious substitutes written, 461; her Father's furious rage, 467; close prisoner in the Berlin Palace, 473; xxiii. 17; her pity for poor Katte, xxii. 488; to marry the Prince of Baireuth, xxiii. 16; her distracted consent, 19; preparations for betrothal, 20; the Prince introduced, 22; a Bride these six months, 66; her magnificent wedding, 71; meeting with her Brother, 76; opens her heart to her Father, 79; a grand problem coming for her, 102, 165; letters from her Brother, 110, 187, 227, 230, 233; helps the Salzburg Protestants, 135; her Father's visit, 165; her inauspicious visit to Berlin, 182, 188; meetings with her Brother and his Bride, 183, 189; difficult meeting with him on his way to Phillipsburg, 226; he visits her at Baireuth, strangely altered, 252; xxiv. 61; disappointed with his manner, 63; return-visit to Berlin, 129; trust of magnetic needles, but so sensitive and liable to deflection, 130; Karl Albert's passage through Baireuth, xxv. 135; account of his Coronation, 137, 143; receives Madame de Belleisle, 140; meets the new Empress, 142; receives the Duchess of Wurtemberg, 143, 417; xxvi. 9; visits Friedrich, 206; her daughter married, 237; at the Berlin Carrousel, queen of the scene, 264; returns home, 295; serious illness, 318; letters from Friedrich, 354, 355; kindness to Voltaire, 415, 416;

- in the neighbourhood of war, xxvii. 189, 247; xxviii. 153; confers Knight-hood on Colonel Mayer, xxvii. 191; letters from Friedrich, 249, 250, 291, 308-310, 349; hopes for peace, 282; a noble sisterly affection in her, vehemently trying the impossible, 298; correspondence with Voltaire, 299, 304, 306; Friedrich's *Épître à ma Sœur*, 301-304; her answer, 310; frantic letter to her Brother, 317; visited by Prince Henri, xxviii. 34; Friedrich's esteem and love for her, 50; his grief at her death, 110, 135: cited, xxi. 28 n
- Wilhelmsthal, battle of, xxix. 303.
- Wilke, xxiii. 32.
- Wille's Engraving of Friedrich, xxiv. 9 n.
- Willelmus Conquæstor, xiii. 83, 241; a man of most flashing discernment and strong lion-heart, 265; not a vulturous fighter, but a valorous governor, 302.
- Willelmus Sacrista, xiii. 74, 86, 91, 101, 115.
- William Conqueror's Home Office, xix. 126; what England owes to him, xxi. 423.
- William Count of Holland, 'Pope's Kaiser,' xxi. 132.
- William, Dutch, xix. 176; xxi. 56, 60, 61, 367, 370; xxiv. 102; xxx. 126.
- William Rufus, xiii. 302, 306; the quarrel of and Anselm a great one, 307; and his Parliaments, xix. 261.
- Williams Archbishop of York, xiv. 122; notice of, 300; in Wales, 301; Cromwell's letter to, 302.
- Williams, Sir Trevor, to be taken, xv. 7, 8.
- Williams, Sir Hanbury, his first audience with Friedrich, xxvi. 245; bits of acrid testimony, but with fatal proclivity to scandal, 247, 251; knows his Cicero by heart, 279; his opinion of Prussia, 326; wandering continental duties, 418, 420; negotiations and bribings at Petersburg, xxvii. 23, 24; all his intriguing come to nothing, 27, 28; his account of the Czarina, 28, 29: mentioned also, 242.
- Willich, Pastor, killed by the Poles, xxx. 56.
- Willingham, Mr., letter to, xiv. 108.
- Willis, Sir Richard, notice of, xvii. 20; spy, xviii. 128.
- Willoughby of Parham, Lord, at Gainsborough, xiv. 156; letter to Cromwell, 163; complained of, 185.
- Wilmanstrand, siege of, xxiv. 266.
- Wilmington, Lord, xxvii. 201.
- Wilmot, Earl Rochester, escapes, xvii. 181, 220.
- Wilson's, Professor, generous encouragement of Sterling, xx. 186.
- Wimpfen, Girondin General, iv. 206, 217.
- Wincesby. See Battle.
- Winchester, Cromwell's summons to, xviii. 209; taken, xiv. 243.
- Winchester, Marquis of, taken at Basing, xiv. 245, 250.
- Windbag, Sir Jabesh, xiii. 166, 275.
- Windebank, Col., shot, xiv. 213.
- Windebank, Secretary, flies, xiv. 110.
- Windsor Castle, Army-council at, xiv. 334.
- Windsor, Parliament Army at, xiv. 141.
- Winkelmann, Johann, vii. 111; xxiii. 189.
- Winkler, Professor, xxix. 151.
- Winram, Laird, and Charles II., xv. 198, 230.
- Winstanley, Leveller, xv. 138.
- Winter Campaigns, xxv. 164.
- Winterfeld goes to Russia, xxiv. 155, 256; how he got his Wife, 262; at Mollwitz, 322; at Rothschild, 405; on march through Saxony, xxv. 394; in Silesia, xxvi. 48; skilfully defends Landshut, brilliant effectuality shining through all he does, 75; with Friedrich as vanguard, 77, 81; Hohenfriedberg, 86, 91; Hennersdorf, 148, 149; hastens after Prince Karl, 154; does not shine in learned circles, 344; discovers the Saxon intrigues, and gains access to their state-documents, xxvii. 7, 8; eager to attack, 42, 43; high hopes for Prussia, 42; in conference with Friedrich, 48, 49; takes a tour in Bohemia, 50; interview with Polish Majesty, 77; negotiates terms with the Saxon Army,

- 109, 110; with Schwerin at Prag, 156, 163-180; badly wounded, 166; account of the battle, 178-180; with the Prince of Prussia, 253-256; received with honour by the King, 263; attacks Nadasti at Hirschfeld, 268; with Bevern watching the Austrians, 269; posted at Jakelsberg, 272; suddenly attacked by Nadasti, 272; vigorous defence and death, 273; except Friedrich, the most shining figure in the Prussian Army, 275; statue in Berlin, xxviii. 113: mentioned also, xxvi. 222, 368.
- Winwood, M P. for Windsor, xvi. 182.
- Wisdom, i. 65; one man with, stronger than all men without, vii. 334; viii. 324, 385; how it has to struggle with Folly, xiii. 91, 92, 97, 163, 264; the higher, the closer its kindred with insanity, 256; a wisest path for every man, 271; the Wise and Brave properly but one class, 300-3, 366; the life of the Gifted not a May-game, but a battle and stern pilgrimage, 357; can alone recognise wisdom, xix. 186, 142, 172; intrinsically of silent nature, 236.
- Wise man, the, alone strong, x. 359, 374.
- Wisest man at the top of society, xi. 186; xix. 313; he and not a counterfeited, under penalties, 27, 239.
- Wish, the Norse god, xii. 22; enlarged into a heaven by Mahomet, 89.
- Wither, Poet, notice of, xvi. 171.
- Wit, modern, xxi. 208, 272; Hanbury's London, xxvi. 245.
- Wits, fashionable, xiii. 189; Friedrich's Colony of French, xxvi. 362.
- Wittelsbach, Graf von, xxv. 133.
- Wittenberg, siege of, xxi. 296; xxv. 394, 401.
- Wobersnow, General, seizes Sulkowski and his Polacks, xxviii. 147, 148; with Dohna against the Russians, 169; his portable field-bakery, 172; urges an attack, 173; at battle of Züllichau, 175; his death, 177.
- Wogan, Col., his maraudings, xv. 228, 229; xviii. 233.
- Wolden, xxiii. 13, 42, 48, 54, 99, 291.
- Wolf, irascible, great-hearted man, x. 295; and the Halle University, xxii. 179; what Friedrich thought of him, xxiii. 324, 382; quits Marburg for his old place at Halle, xxiv. 14, 207; xxvi. 259.
- Wolf, Pater, Kaiser's Confessor, xxi. 62.
- Wolfe, General, worth of, discerned by Pitt, xxviii. 22; at capture of Louisbourg, 49; unsuccessful attempt on Quebec, 198, 199; descends the St. Lawrence for one more attempt, 303; captures Quebec, and with it Canada, 305; the prettiest soldiering among the English for several generations, 305; excitement in England at the news of his victory and death, 309.
- Woltersdorf, Colonel von, beautifully defends himself in Torgau, and beautifully withdraws too, xxviii. 250-53; on march for Dresden, 258, 267; captures a party of Austrian horse, 267; with Wunsch before Dresden, 268; they drive Kleefeld from Torgau, 269; made prisoner at Maxen, 325.
- Wolfgang Wilhelm. See Pfalz-Neuburg.
- Wolfstierna, Swedish Envoy at Dresden, xxvi. 143.
- Wolseley, Sir Charles, in Council of State, xvii. 8n.; on Committee of Kingship, 308, 311. See Worseley.
- Woman's influence, i. 132.
- Women, patriotic gifts by, ii. 298; revolutionary speeches by, 309; insurrection of, 314; at Hôtel-de-Ville, 314; march to Versailles, 317 (see Maillard, Versailles); deputation of, to Assembly, 326; to King, 328, 330; corrupt the Guards, 329; would hang their deputy, 331; in fight, at Versailles, 345; selling sugar, cry of soap, iv. 148; 'Megaras, 192; Hé-rault and Heroines, 227; are born worshippers, ix. 121; xiii. 70.
- Wonder the basis of Worship, i. 66; region of, 260.
- Worcester, picture of the battle of, xi. 248; Charles II. at, xvi. 170; state of, after battle, 181; xviii. 250.
- Worcester, Marquis, his lands given to Cromwell, xiv. 320; author of *Century of Inventions*, 321; xvi. 143.

- Words, slavery to, i. 52; word-mongering and motive-grinding, 157.
- Wordsworth, v. 205; xx. 177.
- Work, man's little, lies not isolated, stranded, x. 19; how it clutches hold of this solid-seeming world, 75; the mission of man, 342; world-wide accumulated, xiii. 164; endless hope in, 183, 244; all work noble, 192; and eternal, 195; the work he has done, an epitome of the Man, 198, 246; work is worship, 250, 288; all work a making madness sane, 256; is for all men, xix. 52, 54; a human *doer* the most complex and inarticulate of Nature's facts, 236; desirability of work, 315; a captain of, xxii. 138. See Labour.
- Workhouses in which no work can be done, xiii. 4.
- Working Aristocracy, xiii. 216, 222, 335, 366; getting strangled, 228; classes uneducated, and educated unworking, ix. 185; ominous condition of the, x. 325, 360; perfect understanding equivalent to remedy, 330; statistics hitherto of little avail, 332; what constitutes the well-being of a man, 334, 343, 353; the poor man seeking work and unable to find it, 345; the best-paid workman the loudest in complaint, 353; need of government, 368; man, true education of the, xix. 215.
- Workmen, English, unable to find work, xiii. 4, 23; intolerable lot, 261.
- Workshop of Life, i. 190. See Labour.
- World much of a bedlam, xxvi. 115.
- Worms, the venerable city of, viii. 190; Luther at, xii. 158; Treaty of, xxv. 317, 337.
- Woronzow, Countess of, Czar Peter's Mistress, xxix. 278-281.
- Woronzow, Grand-Chancellor of Russia, xxix. 409.
- Worseley, Col., a Major-General, xvii. 155 n.
- Worship, transcendent wonder, xii. 12; forms of, xiii. 162; scenic theory of, 174; apeliike, 190; the truest, 250, 288; practical, xix. 310; many phases of, 332, 360, 389. See Hero-worship, Religion.
- Worth, human, and worthlessness, xiii. 103; practical reverence for, xix. 91; xxix. 355; the essence of all true 'religions,' 129, 136. See Intellect, Pandarus.
- Wotton, Sir Henry, xxi. 324 n., 329, 335.
- Wrath, a background of, in every man and creature, xi. 213.
- Wraxall, cited, xxii. 203 n.; xxix. 385.
- Wray, Sir John, notice of, xviii. 190; Cromwell's letter to, 190.
- Wreech, Colonel, xxii. 296; xxiii. 47; his Wife and Friedrich at Cüstrin, 53, 58.
- Wretchedness, vii. 61; viii. 360.
- Writing Era, xxi. 14.
- Wunsch, of the Prussian Free-Corps, xxvii. 190; he distinguishes himself under Prince Henri, xxviii. 154; Kunersdorf, 209, 227, marches into Saxony, 242, 254-258, 262; hastens to relief of Dresden, 266, 267; hears that Schmietttau has capitulated, 268; delivers Torgau, and is lord of the Northern regions, 269; seemingly a high career before him, 270; with Finck at Maxen, 316, 318, 320, 324; tries to get the Cavalry away, but is obliged to surrender, 325; defends Glatz, xxx. 171.
- Würbitz, fight of, xxvi. 48.
- Würmser burns Habelschwert, xxx. 171.
- Württemberg, the Duke of, employs Schiller's Father, v. 6; undertakes the education of Schiller, 11; not equal to the task, 30, 264.
- Württemberg, Duchess Dowager of, Wilhelmina's account of her at Frankfurt, xxv. 137; and at Baireuth, 143; her reception bedroom at Berlin, 145; quarrels with D'Argens, 156; demands her son of King Friedrich, 332.
- Württemberg, Eberhard Ludwig, Duke of, xxii. 430; xxiii. 216; matrimonial and amatory iniquity, xxii. 430, is moved to repentance, 434; xxiii. 20.
- Württemberg, Karl Alexander Duke of, xxii. 486; xxiii. 153, 216, 265.
- Württemberg, Friedrich Eugen, xxv. 147; xxvi. 238; he raises his arm against Excellency Broglio, xxvii.

- 76; is at Hochkirsch, xxviii. 108; watching Loudon and Haddick, 181; at Sagan, 183; battle of Kunersdorf, 216, 225; wounded, 225; ill at Berlin, 287; at the Castle of Schwedt, seized by the Cossacks, 384; hastens to the assistance of Berlin, xxix. 91; marches into Saxony, 102, 105; dispatches Colonel Kleist upon his brother, the reigning Duke, 106; at Rostock, 179 n.; with Heyde defending Colberg, 210-215, 235, 236; gives his poor Wife great trouble, xxx. 13; becomes reigning Duke, 13, 121: mentioned also, xxviii. 4; xxix. 179 n., 261 n.
- Württemberg, Karl Eugen, Duke of, boyish gallantries, xxv. 143; under the guardianship of Friedrich, 143, 331; Schiller's Duke, 146; parting letter from Friedrich, 365; marries Wilhelmina's Daughter, xxvi. 237; impossible to live with him, 237; xxx. 88; at Kolin, xxvii. 232; his poor Wife, xxviii. 153; his bitter enmity to Friedrich, 335; driven headlong out of Fulda, 336, 337; frightened homeward and out of the wars altogether, xxix. 106.
- Würzburg, Bishop of, xxv. 331.
- Wusterhausen, description of, xxii. 31; Treaty of, 155, 189, 269; xxiv. 355; Tabagie at, xxii. 170.
- Wyatt, Sir Dudley, notice of, xiv. 313, 314.
- Wylich, Capt., xxiii. 292; xxvii. 61, 63.
- Wyndham, Henry, xxviii. 17.
- Wyndham, Miss Barbara, xxvi. 322; subsidy to Friedrich, xxviii. 17-21.
- XAVIER, Prince, his profane revelling during the siege of Prag, xxvii. 208; at the burning of Zittau, 258; with Broglio, xxix. 44; in Saxony, 254: mentioned also, 413.
- Xenien, a German Dunciad by Goethe and Schiller, v. 144.
- YANKEE Transcendentalists, xiii. 363; Nation, xxiv. 390.
- Yarmouth, Countess of, xxiv. 53.
- Year's-day, new, difference of style, xiv. 38 n.
- York city, relieved by Prince Rupert, xiv. 192; captured by Parliament Army, 195.
- York, Duke of, besieges Valenciennes, iv. 207; at Dunkirk, 295; xviii. 96; escapes, xiv. 273; at Breslau, xxx. 253.
- York House, meeting at, xviii. 137.
- Yorke, Hon. Mr., papers burned, xiv. 315.
- Yorkshire, the Civil War in, xiv. 141.
- Young Men and Maidens, i. 125, 131.
- Young, Arthur, at French Revolution, ii. 278-286.
- Youth, Gilt, iv. 366, 384.
- Youth and Manhood, vii 40; mudbath of youthful dissipations, 44; xxii. 220, 222. See Education.
- Ysenburg, Prince von, beaten by Soubise, xxviii. 124; near Frankfurt-on-Mayn, 144; battle of Bergen, 149; death, 150.
- ZAMOISKI, xxix. 427.
- Zanchy, Colonel, relieves Passage, xv. 227; wounded, 269.
- Zastrow, Commandant, makes poor defence of Schweidnitz, which is captured by Loudon, xxix. 219; letter from the King, who leaves him well alone for the future, 222, 223; at Amöneburg, 320.
- Zastrow, General, killed, xxvii. 146; xxix. 223.
- Zedlitz, Minister of Public Justice, xxx. 82; cannot pronounce sentence, as enjoined by the King, 198-200.
- Zeiller, *Beschreibung des Boheem*, cited, xxiv. 300 n.
- Zeitz, xxiii. 136.
- Zelle, xxii. 48.
- Zelter, cited, xxix. 150 n.
- Zemzem, the sacred Well, xii. 59.
- Zentha, battle of, xxii. 448.
- Zero, the Right Honourable, xix. 122.
- Ziethen, Captain, xxiii. 264; at Rothschloss, xxiv. 404; rises rapidly in favour, 406; in Moravia, xxv. 155; at siege of Prag, 418; repulses Pandours at Tein Bridge, 423; decidedly a rather likeable man, 424; at Elbe-Teinitz, 433, 434; is with the Old Dessauer in Silesia, xxvi. 10; takes

message to Margraf Karl at Jägersdorf, 74; at Hohenfriedberg, 94; at Hennersdorf, 150; at Pirna, xxvii. 108; on march for Prag, 146; in battle, 170, 173; at Kohn, 218, 219, 229; with Prince of Prussia, 254; with Bevern at battle of Breslau, 368; takes command of the Bevern wreck, 372; joins the King at Parchwitz, 372; Leuthen, 386, 391, 392, 397; chases Prince Karl from Breslau, 405; Troppau, xxviii. 26, 30; Olmütz, 35; meets Mosel's convoy, 36, 40; no efforts can save it, 41, 42; following Daun into Saxony, 84; at Hochkirch, 100, 102, 103, 106, nearly captured at Sorau, 281; reports the approach of Reichsfolk on Finck, 320; court-martial on Finck, 328; in battle of Liegnitz, xxix. 66, 70; has command of half the force at Torgau, 113, 114; takes a wrong road, 116; recovers it only not too late, 127, 128; with Friedrich in Silesia, 186; at Camp of Bunzelwitz, 192; winter in Breslau, 238; once took the King sharply at his word, xxx. 116; in his old age the King tenderly compels him to sit down in his presence, 116, 117; a kind of demigod among the Prussians, 277; lives at Wusterau; Friedrich's friendly interest for him, 283, 286, 287; mentioned also, 212.

Ziethen, Rittmeister von, xxx. 280.

Zimmermann, Dr., xxiii. 334; xxv. 369 n.; xxvi. 372; at Sans-Souci,

xxx. 64, 65; sketch of his life, 66-69, Dialogue with King Friedrich, 69-73; attends him in his last illness, 262; his unwise book, 262; can do no good, and takes himself away, 265: cited, 66 n.

Zimmermann, Herr, the poor kidnapped carpenter, xxii. 141.

Zinnow, Finance Manager, xxviii. 272.

Zinzendorf, Count, xxvi. 147.

Zips is pledged by Sigismund to the Polish Crown, xxx. 36; taken back again by mere force, 37.

Zisca, risen out of the ashes of murdered Huss, xxi. 182, 196; xxii. 161; xxv. 127, birth and burial-place of, 189; Tabor built by, 411.

Ziskowitz with Daun near Olmütz, xxviii. 35, 36; Mosel's convoy ruined, 38-41.

Zittau burnt by the Austrians, xxvii. 258.

Zollner, xxii. 31: cited, 33 n.; xxiv. 225 n.; xxvi. 122 n.

Zorndorf, xxiii. 53, 57; environs, xxviii. 62, 63; battle of, 65, 79.

Zuckmantel, a Moravian town, xxiv. 300 n.

Zweibrück, Reichs General, xxviii. 84; pushes across the Metal Mountains, 83; in Pirna country, 83, 88; chased by Prince Henri, 153; again enters Saxony, 249; besieges Dresden, 259, 260-264; hurries off for Toplitz, 266; broken faith, 270; with Daun at Bautzen, 285, quits Dresden on the approach of Friedrich, xxix. 27.

THE END